



THE GRAND LODGE OF  
BRITISH FREEMASONS IN GERMANY

**Australian Bush Fire – Disaster Relief Action 2020**

The 2019–20 Australian bushfire season began with several serious uncontrolled fires in June 2019. Throughout the summer hundreds of fires burnt, mainly in the southeast of the country. The major fires peaked during December–January and as of early March 2020 the fires had ruined an estimated 186,000 square kilometres of land, destroyed over 5,900 buildings (including 2,779 homes) and killed at least 34 people. The scale of the damage was overwhelming.

From September 2019 to March 2020, fires heavily impacted various regions of the state of New South Wales. Multiple states of emergency were declared across New South Wales (NSW), Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).



In early January 2020 the Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany (GL BFG) was made aware of a NSW Freemasons Disaster Relief Fund to assist with immediate and practical assistance to the Brethren in their jurisdiction and their families as well as local communities who have been affected by both the fires and drought conditions. This was via a communication from RWBro Derek J Robson AM, Grand Master of the NSW & ACT States of Australia (pictured here in full regalia).

The Disaster Fund was administered and promoted by Masonicare, which actively participates and runs numerous fundraising activities throughout the year for local communities. The first donation given from this Disaster Fund was \$100,000 to the NSW Rural Fire Service, to supplement its assistance to RFS volunteers and also the widows and children of those firefighters who tragically lost their lives defending their communities.

Recognising the urgency of the situation the Grand Master of the GL BFG, MWBro Glyn Edmonds, sent out a call for supporting donations for this cause to all constituent lodges, the Grand Lodge of Germany (VGLvD), all Grand Lodges within the VGLvD, and the Freimaurerisches Hilfswerke. All monies were to be collected in the Grand Lodge Charity Account and the GL BFG made an immediate donation to kick-start proceedings of €4.000. Word quickly spread and donations were immediately forthcoming from individuals, lodges, Grand Lodges and from other masonic orders within the districts of Germany and further afield.

In an unprecedented show of united generosity and charity, one of the grand principles in which the order of our marvellous fraternity is founded and practiced, an astounding sum had been received by the proposed cut-off date and the GL BFG was able to donate €30.000 to the Masonicare NSW Freemasons Disaster Relief Fund on the last day of February. An incredible achievement for such a small **Grand** lodge.

A very big thank you from GL BFG goes to all who contributed to this remarkable effort and particular mention must go to the Freimaurerisches Hilfswerk and the Grosse National Mutterloge zu Dden Drei Welkugeln who contributed €5.000 each, Lodge Secto Aure (Venice) who contributed €2.000, Royal Order of Scotland who contributed €1.500, the Supreme Grand Chapter of British Royal Arch Masonry who contributed €1.000 as did the Loge zur Siegenden Sonne and the following lodges within the GL BFG; Britannia Lodge 843 and Thistle & Saltire 1040 who contributed €1.000 each.

On 7th March a very kind letter from the Chairman of the Grand Charity, RW Bro Andrew Fraser (pictured here on the right also in splendid regalia) was received by the Grand Master of the GL BFG MWBro Glyn Edmonds with the following words;

‘On behalf of the Chairman of the Grand Charity [myself] and the Masonicare Board I wish to sincerely thank you for the generous donation of \$48,582.99 to Masonicare’s Bushfire Disaster Relief Appeal. The scale of the fires has been overwhelming. This contribution is a much appreciated endorsement of our support for those affected by this terrible disaster, and demonstrates the core Masonic principle of Charity.

For further information on the Bushfire Disaster Relief Appeal please visit [www.masonicare.org.au](http://www.masonicare.org.au).

In due course we will notify the Jurisdiction as to how the funds generated by the Appeal will be distributed to those in need. Once again thank you for the donation, your support of Masonicare is greatly appreciated’

Masonicare uses the masonic network to identify and help deserving causes affected by this tragedy. Derek J Robson AM, Grand Master of the NSW & ACT states the following in an article posted on social media,

‘Local Freemasons are best placed to know their local communities. This is why I am asking local Lodges to identify individuals and families in their area who have lost loved ones, property or are otherwise affected by the combined tragedies of bushfire and drought. I encourage Lodges to use any accumulated funds to provide practical assistance to local communities. The support should be tailored to meet the personal needs of the individual. In some instances, cash grants may be appropriate to allow the recipient to purchase without embarrassment or undue intrusion items of a personal nature. In other cases, direct payments to local businesses may be the best way of ensuring needs are met. Or, it may simply be the gift of companionship, compassion and consideration. Where we can, we should be seen to be supporting the local communities in the affected areas.(reference <https://www.facebook.com/495415527182901/posts/2774566725934425/>)

The GL BFG is humbled and extremely appreciative of the amount given to this aid initiative and to the speed with which it was donated. An old proverb wisely states ‘He who gives quickly, gives twice’.

We can all be assured it will be faithfully applied.

Fraternally,

W Bro Christopher Bilson, GL BFG Grand Charity Steward.

