SURVIVING THE FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF DISASTER

TOWARDS AN EMPOWERMENT MODEL

Disasters have significant financial impacts on those affected. Financial counselling empowers survivors to deal with the financial challenges they face.

Financial and Consumer Rights Council [FCRC] is the Victorian peak body for financial counsellors. We are working with the Victorian community sector to develop integrated models of support/care, drawing on our members' experiences in the Black Saturday bushfires [2009], and Victorian floods [2010].

IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

FORWARD PLANNING

Financial counselling services should be incorporated into disaster planning and early stages of disaster response

Focus on managing stress and uncertainty; prioritise access to essential services, medical support, food and shelter

EARLY INTERVENTION

Disaster survivors have timely access to financial counselling services, including assistance with hardship arrangements

LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Reduced negative mental health impacts from financial issues; management of risks that come with insurance and assistance payouts

RECOVERY

Clients are empowered to self-advocate, maximise income, negotiate debts, deal with creditors (including insurance companies)

BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- Insufficient financial counsellors to meet current demand
- Long waiting lists to see a financial counsellor in most communities
- Waiting lists are dominated by people in crisis

