

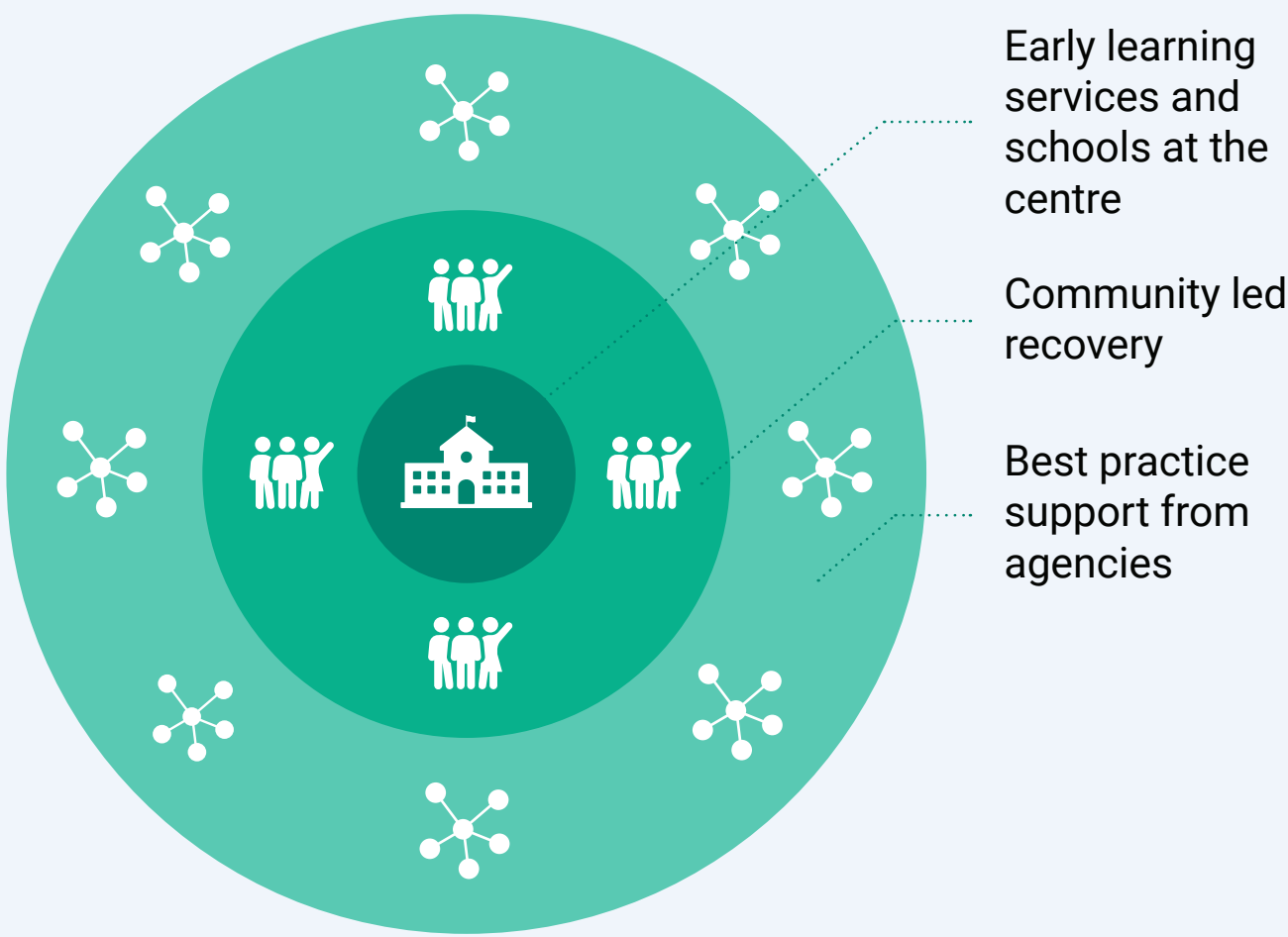
The Be You Bushfire Response Program

The Be You Bushfire Response Program is an innovative model developed in response to the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020. Led by Beyond Blue, with delivery partners Early Childhood Australia, headspace and Emerging Minds, the Program recognises the unique role of learning communities in supporting recovery and resilience after bushfires.



The program model

The Program model and design applies core principles from each of the circles above to a bushfire recovery context, placing educators and learning communities at the centre of all design, delivery, practice and thinking.

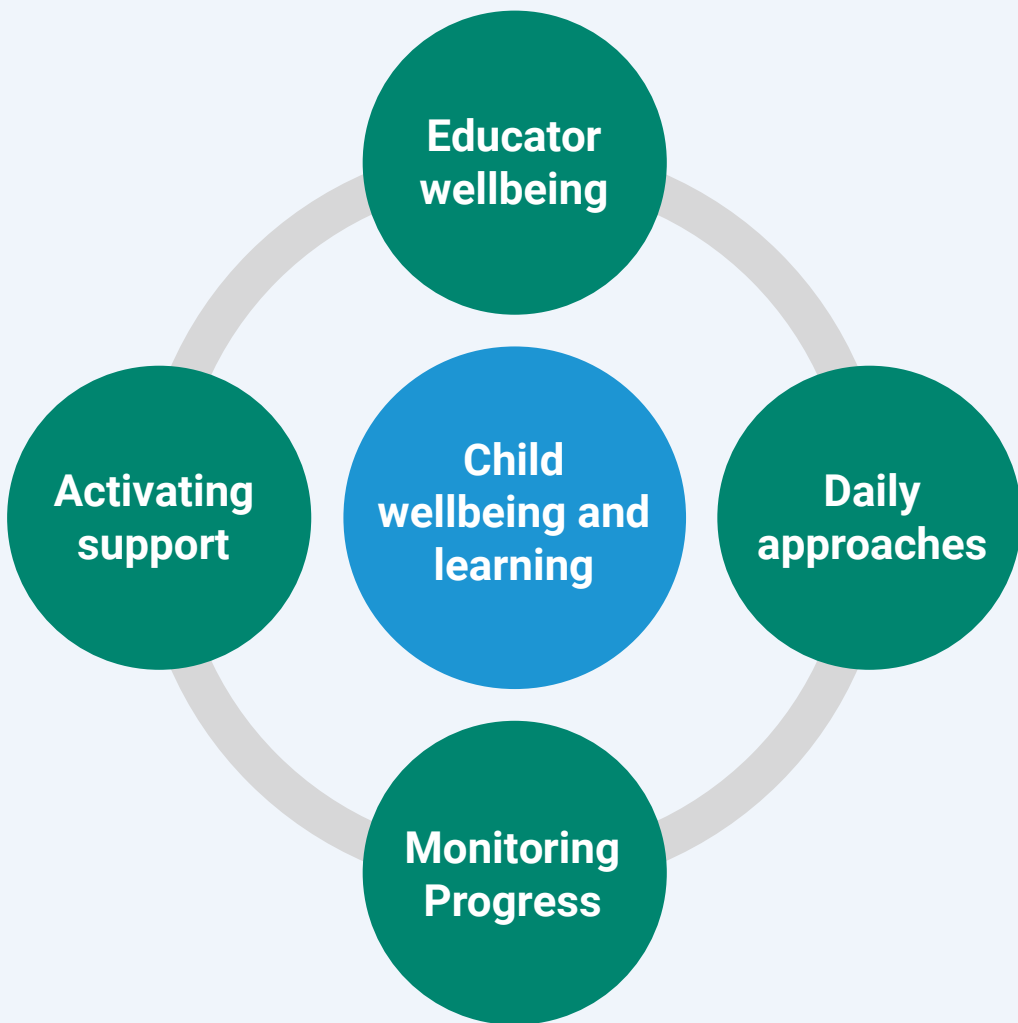


Early learning services and schools at the Centre (Be You Bushfire Response Program model, March 2020)

Educators' framework for supporting recovery

The importance of educator wellbeing was highlighted in the Educators' Framework for Supporting Recovery developed by delivery partners Emerging Minds specifically for the Program in 2021.

Learning communities have become increasingly engaged in trauma informed practice, noting its value in better understanding and responding to behaviours they may see in children, young people, families and staff.



Educator Framework for Supporting Recovery (Emerging Minds 2021)

A collaborative partnership

Each organisation in the partnership brings specialist knowledge to the governance, design and implementation of the Be You Bushfire Response Program. The Program facilitated comprehensive stakeholder consultations involving representatives from the mental health, disaster recovery and education sectors. This process promoted greater cross-sector collaboration, identifying the current status and needs of learning communities and highlighting any support service delivery overlaps, gaps and further collaboration opportunities.

Participation and engagement

Delivered tailored mental health support:

- to over **430 learning communities**
- across **13 bushfire impacted priority regions** in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia

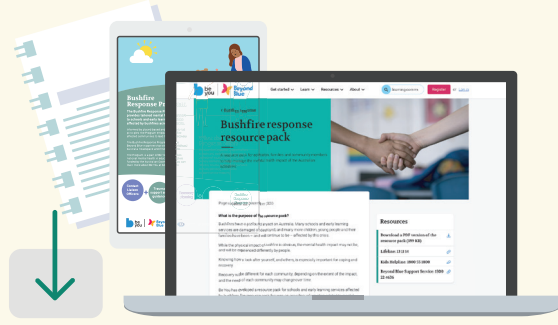


Produced 3 national webinars

- Preparing learning communities for bushfire season
- Understanding trauma responses following a bushfire
- A roadmap to recovery following a bushfire



Developed the Bushfire Response Resource Pack, a resource to support early learning services and schools (**4,495 downloads**)



Facilitated 232 educator wellbeing sessions and provided coaching for school principals, early learning service directors and educators



Produced a series of e-learning modules each tailored to the early years, primary and secondary school settings and promoting the role of educators in supporting recovery from trauma



Supported 1,530 local networking events

Hosted 45 interagency and service provider meetings between March 2020 and May 2021 in **13 priority regions, across 4 states**



Evidence

The Program model is based on best practice in community development work in disaster recovery and is underpinned by trauma informed approaches and the National Principles for Disaster Recovery. (Social Recovery Reference Group, Australia 2018)

A Program evaluation will be completed in August 2021. Preliminary findings indicate gains in supporting learning communities to recover and build disaster resilience. These include greater:

- collaborative and coordinated support service delivery for learning communities
- opportunities for children and young people to make meaning of their lived experiences to promote recovery from trauma
- awareness of educator wellbeing strategies and trauma informed practice and their value in building capacity to provide emotional support and foster resilience.

Next steps

From July 2021 to June 2022, the Bushfire Response Program communities will continue to transition to the Be You initiative as registered Be You learning communities, ensuring Consultant support. Targeted activities include communities of practice and webinars; expanding knowledge and skills around disaster recovery and resilience.

Further opportunities to continue cross-sector collaboration will be a key focus of the next stage of the Be You Bushfire Response Program.

Evaluation findings and resources developed during the Program will be incorporated into Be You. This knowledge translation will strengthen the capacity of Be You to support Australian learning communities prepare for, withstand, and recover from disasters now and into the future.