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Equity Trustees establishes Australian charitable trusts to support national disaster recovery

Australia's leading trustee company, Equity Trustees, has completed the establishment of [two perpetual charitable trusts](#) designed specifically to support people and communities around the country to recover from disaster and emergency events.

With the support of the Commonwealth Government, and all Members of both Houses of the Federal Parliament, Equity Trustees had the two Trusts registered in record time and they were listed in the Tax Act after the Bill passed through the Senate on 6 February. The listing ensures tax deductibility for all donations from individuals and companies and the ability to accept contributions from private and public ancillary funds.

The [Australian Volunteers Support Trust](#) and the [Community Rebuilding Trust](#) were established in response to the recent catastrophic bushfires and they will also operate to support any future disaster and emergency event recovery effort. The Trusts are a joint initiative with the Business Council of Australia (BCA), with our work being performed pro bono, including pro bono support from Gilbert and Tobin and Deloitte.

Equity Trustees Chairman, the Hon Jeff Kennett AC said: "This joint effort is about planning for any future recovery efforts and being positioned to help ensure there is a pool of funds available to complement donations made in response to specific disasters and emergency events.

"We need to think long-term, and we need to have a way people, business and philanthropic funds can have confidence in where they direct their donations and their support. Trusts with clearly defined purposes are the best way of ensuring funds are directed where people want and have the lowest administrative costs, ensuring more dollars benefit the community."

The **Australian Volunteer Support Trust (AVST)** will assist the family of any recognised emergency services volunteer in Australia who tragically loses their life while responding to a disaster. Families of such volunteers who lost their lives after 1 July 2019 will be able to seek support from the Trust.

The AVST Advisory Panel is being led by Mr Kennett and includes Jennifer Westacott AO, Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, David Gonski AC and Lisa Paul AO. Representatives from Australian emergency service volunteering organisations will also be included on the Panel.

"We are deeply committed to supporting the families of those emergency services volunteers who have lost their lives serving and protecting all of us and our communities. We particularly want to ensure that the children of such volunteers are not disadvantaged and their key to future opportunities through education is secure," Mr Kennett said.

The **Community Rebuilding Trust (CRT)** will support the rebuilding of community assets and is part of a larger Community Rebuilding Initiative chaired by General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC, and a committee including John Anderson AO, Rebecca Frizelle, Danny Gilbert AM, Katie Page, Tim Reed, Tony Shepherd AO, Richard Goyder AO, Yvonne von Hartel AM and Jennifer Westacott AO.

Equity Trustees, which manages and administers more than 650 charitable trusts and distributes more than \$80 million a year, provided its specialised trustee services team to establish both trusts.

Equity Trustees Managing Director Mick O'Brien said: "With the listing in the Tax Act, the two Trusts we have established can also support charities and foundations in a way that not only honours the intention of the donors for the immediate cause but also contributes to a longer term approach to support.



“This is one way Equity Trustees can offer practical and useful support to the recovery effort. These trusts have been established to ensure all money that goes into them will go to the recovery and rebuilding effort,” Mr. O’Brien said

More information is available at www.eqt.com.au/DisasterResponse

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Equity Trustees was established in 1888 for the purpose of providing independent and impartial Trustee and Executor services to help families throughout Australia protect their wealth. As Australia’s leading specialist trustee company, we offer a diverse range of services to individuals, families and corporate clients including asset management, estate planning, philanthropic services and Responsible Entity (RE) services for external Fund Managers.

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