



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Australian school students unite to rally around bushfire victims**

### **SchoolAid launches emergency appeal to enable Australian students to support children and their communities affected by the devastating bushfires.**

Schools across Australia are being urged by Australian non-profit organisation SchoolAid to join their emergency online appeal and help the children affected by Australia's greatest natural disaster.

Numerous fires are still burning, and among the tragic loss of life and whole communities – three primary schools have been lost and 70 schools closed throughout the state. As media around the country report on the devastating effects of the fires, children from other parts of Australia who are witnessing the impact can also be deeply affected.

SchoolAid is giving schools, students and teachers the opportunity to unite across the country and respond to this crisis affecting their peers. Through the SchoolAid Victorian Bushfires Emergency Appeal kids are able to reach out to other kids and their communities who require assistance and help. Information on how schools can get involved is now available online, including *an Emergency Appeal Action Kit* with fundraising tips and ideas and teacher resources. Students will also be able to create 'Messages of Hope' for the communities in affected areas of Victoria.

"Children are often the worst hit and most vulnerable in disasters like these, with families, homes, schools and communities torn apart" says SchoolAid Acting CEO Christine McLiver. "As Australians we are committed to showing our support in times of need and that also includes our children. SchoolAid provides a positive way for Aussie kids to show their compassion and get involved in community support initiatives."

Throughout the appeal SchoolAid will be working closely with the Victorian Department of Education, Victorian Principals Association, VIEU Catholic Principals Association and Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals to establish where assistance is most needed.

Through its website, SchoolAid coordinates the support of students across Australia's 11,000 schools. To date, over a thousand schools from all education sectors have participated in SchoolAid appeals, collectively raising over \$1.5 million in response to tragic events around the world such as Cyclone Nargis in Burma, the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Beslan School Massacre and Cyclone Larry in far north Queensland.

Jan Owen AM, Executive Director of Social Ventures Australia, a supporter of SchoolAid commented, "SchoolAid is ideally positioned to raise awareness of the tragedy and push a fundraising initiative for children by children. As supporters of SchoolAid, we have seen the incredible impact their emergency appeals can have. This appeal will empower children to help others caught in a horrific and devastating situation."

SchoolAid is calling on all schools around Australia to get involved and encourage their students to unite in the response to the Victorian Bushfire Emergency Appeal by registering at [www.schoolaid.org.au](http://www.schoolaid.org.au)



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**About School Aid - [www.schoolaid.org.au](http://www.schoolaid.org.au)**

Student-led philanthropy program School Aid, encourages schools to join together in response to times of tragedy and humanitarian need, in particular where children's capacity to attend school and learn has been affected. Through this network of support, real and genuine improvements can be made to children's educational opportunities and provide access to schooling around the world.

SchoolAid was formed in 1999 by former school principal Sean Gordon in response to the anxiety he felt as a parent and educator about the effect the major tragedies of the world were having on the minds of our children – aiming to produce hope-filled philanthropic kids, who are resilient in the face of tragedy and understand the difference they can make in their own communities and beyond. SchoolAid is also a portfolio initiative of Social Ventures Australia (SVA), an independent, non-profit organisation, which aligns the interests of philanthropists with the needs of social entrepreneurs to combat some of Australia's most pressing community problems.