

AFTER THE FIRES & VOLUNTARY ACTS OF KINDNESS

KINGLAKE IN RECOVERY by Rev. Chi Kwang Sunim

In the wake of the fires, the very distraught and damaged communities of the Kinglake Ranges, having lost two thirds of its buildings, are further engaging in local community 'Not for Profit' groups, to alleviate further suffering during the long road to recovery.

A taste of winter has been experienced this last week and many on the mountain will face the most difficult part of this disaster, surviving winter and isolation. There are those still living in caravans or even in tents, unimaginable! Many feel so isolated from their community and friends, living in one of the few houses left in the street or they are off the mountain in temporary re-location. Others just withdrawing in exhaustion and confusion.

As the generously donated funds to Red Cross will provide many benefits in rebuilding and long term infrastructure, many under-supported areas in the communities have been recognised, especially in the physical, social and mental well being of people. 'Fire brain' is an often used local term for minds that are not functioning well.

The following local volunteering networks are greatly assisting the physical and social needs of many who have lost so much. Kinglake Action Network & Development Organisation (**KANDO**), The Health and Wellbeing Centre (**HWC**), Global Care, Mountain Monthly (**MM**), The Community Emergency Response Team (**CERT**) the Kinglake Ranges Radio (**KRR**) and Kinglake Ranges Representative Group (**KRRG**), are some whose actions have allowed people on the mountain to communicate, connect and genuinely care for one another.

Since the Fires I have become involved in supporting these wonderful incentives; **THE HARVEST COMMUNITY KITCHEN and COMMUNITY HUB** is a **KANDO** Action. Here Healthy food and daily activities for children and adults are conducted to promoting health and wellbeing for only \$5.00 an evening. About 150 -200 people come daily.

The Community Emergency Response Team - CERT relies on volunteers to train as Ambulance first aid members and go out to help in emergency situations while ambulances come from off the mountain. Cases are growing as recovery is slow.

Kinglake Ranges Representative Group - KRRG is a newly elected group to assist Christine Nixon and their recovery committee in long term plans to rebuild the towns and areas effected by the fires. This committee liaisons with community interests and needs.

Kinglake Ranges Radio - KRR - 95.4 The local radio has offered necessary day to day communication to the Ranges communities and I and others here share what we are about. My slot is Tuesdays at 9.am where Buddhism, compassion and mind are discussed.

All require your generosity & support to continue the great work these volunteers and their organisations are offering.

Do attend the Buddha's Birthday celebration at Federation Square on the 16th and 17th of May and look for the 'Kinglake After the Fires' recovery tent.

Please feel free to ask questions on the '**Voluntary Acts of Kindness**' in the Ranges.