



COMMONWEALTH BANK SETS UP EMERGENCY HOTLINE FOR FIRE VICTIMS

Sydney, 19 January 2003: The Commonwealth Bank has responded to the fires in Eastern Australia by establishing a customer emergency hotline, activating its special emergency assistance package and pledging \$100,000 to a public appeal to assist people affected by the fires.

"The Commonwealth Bank is concerned at the impact that the fires in the ACT, Victoria and NSW will have on families and business people," said the Bank's Group Executive, Retail Banking Services, Mr Hugh Harley. "We've put special arrangements in place to help our customers."

Mr Harley said the Bank has established a 24-hour toll free number for customers. "Our staff are now on hand to assist our customers with prompt responses to their concerns and enquiries."

The toll free number is **1800 650 630**

Key features of the Bank's special assistance package include:

- prioritisation of claims to Commlnsure for customers seeking assistance for their home and contents insurance,
- loan restructuring for business customers with existing loans, without incurring the usual bank establishment fees,
- additional loans or changes to repayment arrangements for Commonwealth Bank home loan customers who may experience difficulties because of the fires,
- review and postponement of credit card instalments for customers of good standing and consideration of requests for emergency credit limit increases,
- waiving prepayment charges over the next month for affected customers wishing to access term deposits, Commonwealth Investment Bonds and CBFC debentures ahead of the maturity date,
- waiving branch service fees where the customer is looking to obtain a service from the Bank as a result of the disaster.

At this stage, the Bank expects all its branches in the ACT to be open for business tomorrow and branch staff and relationship managers will be ready to discuss with affected customers their overall financial position, changes in repayment arrangements or to consider options for additional loan funds.

The Bank has also pledged a \$100,000 donation to support a public appeal for fire victims and will accept donations from members of the public at any branch of the Commonwealth Bank.

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