

Who can use this service?

This support service is **FREE OF CHARGE** to **ANYONE** whose mental or emotional wellbeing may have been affected by **their bushfire experience.**



Other helpful services...

For domestic violence counselling and referral...

Confidential Line: 1800 156 789

For drug and alcohol related issues...

Direct Line: 1800 888 789

For support for family members of people who misuse alcohol and other drugs...

Family Drug and Alcohol Help: 1300 660 068

For counselling for loss and grief...

Griefline: (03) 9596 7799 (12pm-3pm, 7 days a week)

For counselling for children and young people up to the age of 25...

Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800

For general telephone counselling...

Lifeline: 131 114

For counselling for men with family and relationship concerns...

Mensline Australia: 1300 78 99 78

For crisis counselling, support and information...

SuicideLine (Victoria): 1300 651 251

ACCESS TO ALLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (ATAPS)

Funded by the Australian Government's
Department of Health and Ageing

...A PROGRAM MANAGED BY:

Central Highlands
GENERAL PRACTICE NETWORK

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Psychological services provided through

ATAPS...



ACCESS TO ALLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (ATAPS)

A FREE bushfire counselling service for referred clients.

What is the ATAPS Program?

The **Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program** is a federally funded program providing short term psychological strategies to people with a high prevalence mental health disorder who are assessed by a GP as eligible for the services. The program targets people who have difficulty accessing these services due to geographic, financial or other disadvantage.

Services are provided free to clients. Divisions of General Practice pay the Allied Health Provider (AHP) for the services provided.

Clients sign an attendance form at the time of service to verify they have received the service from the AHP.

What special provisions have been made within ATAPS for bushfire related referrals?

Following the Victorian bushfires in February 2009, the Federal Government made significant funds available under the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program to ensure that people affected by the bushfires would have easy access to psychological support when required, via the ATAPS Program.

Nine Divisions of General Practice across the bushfire affected areas have received funding for bushfire related ATAPS referrals.

Each Division differs in their procedures but Division Staff will step you through the process if you are unaware of how it works.

The Central Highlands General Practice Network (CHGPN) have developed a *Bushfire ATAPS Resource Kit* - it is available on our website [via this link](#) to the Mental Health resource:

<http://www.chgpn.com.au/community-partners/resources/mental-health>

What are the eligibility criteria?

The eligibility criteria are broad - your patient does not need to have lost their house or a loved one to access the services.

Simply speaking, if patients have persistent psychological symptoms as a result of their bushfire experiences they can access these services.



How is a referral made?

To make a referral under the ATAPS Program:

GPs will need to:

1. **Complete the Mental Health Assessment and Plan** with your patient, and then
2. **Contact CHGPN and tell them that you wish to make a bushfire related referral through the ATAPS program or use the link to use the CHGPN Bushfire ATAPS Step by step guide and referral pathway.**

<http://www.chgpn.com.au/community-partners/resources/mental-health>

Case Managers will need to:

1. **Contact CHGPN as per Point 2 (above).**
With this referral process the Case Manager is recommended to use the CHGPN Bush fire ATAPS referral letter template and send the referral to one of the ATAPS Allied Health Professionals listed.
2. **Ask the client to make an appointment with their nominated GP, for them to undertake a GP Mental Health Assessment & Plan.**

Please Note: The client is able to see the ATAPS Allied Health Professional prior to getting a GP Mental Health Assessment & Plan but is encourage to see their GP before the 2nd visit to their ATAPS Allied Health Professional.

Funding & session arrangements.

Psychological services are provided free of charge to patients with a bushfire related mental health issue.

The AHP is responsible for invoicing the Division (as per usual ATAPS arrangements).

A referral is for up to 6 sessions of psychological service provision with an option of further sessions after a GP review.

Sessions for bushfire related referrals can be unlimited if required.

Review & repeat sessions.

Following their initial sessions it is important that the person attends their GP to discuss how the sessions have gone and to assess if further sessions are required (again for up to 6 sessions).

GPs will need to follow the same procedures to obtain a 'repeat voucher number'.

AHP contractual requirements.

AHPs referred to must be contracted with the relevant Division to provide psychological services.

AHPs who do not have a current contract with the relevant division will not be eligible to receive funds from that Division's ATAPS program.

If you are unsure who you can refer to please contact the Division directly.

If the client is currently living out of your local area but would like to access a bushfire related ATAPS referral please contact the Central Highlands General Practice Network directly for further assistance.