

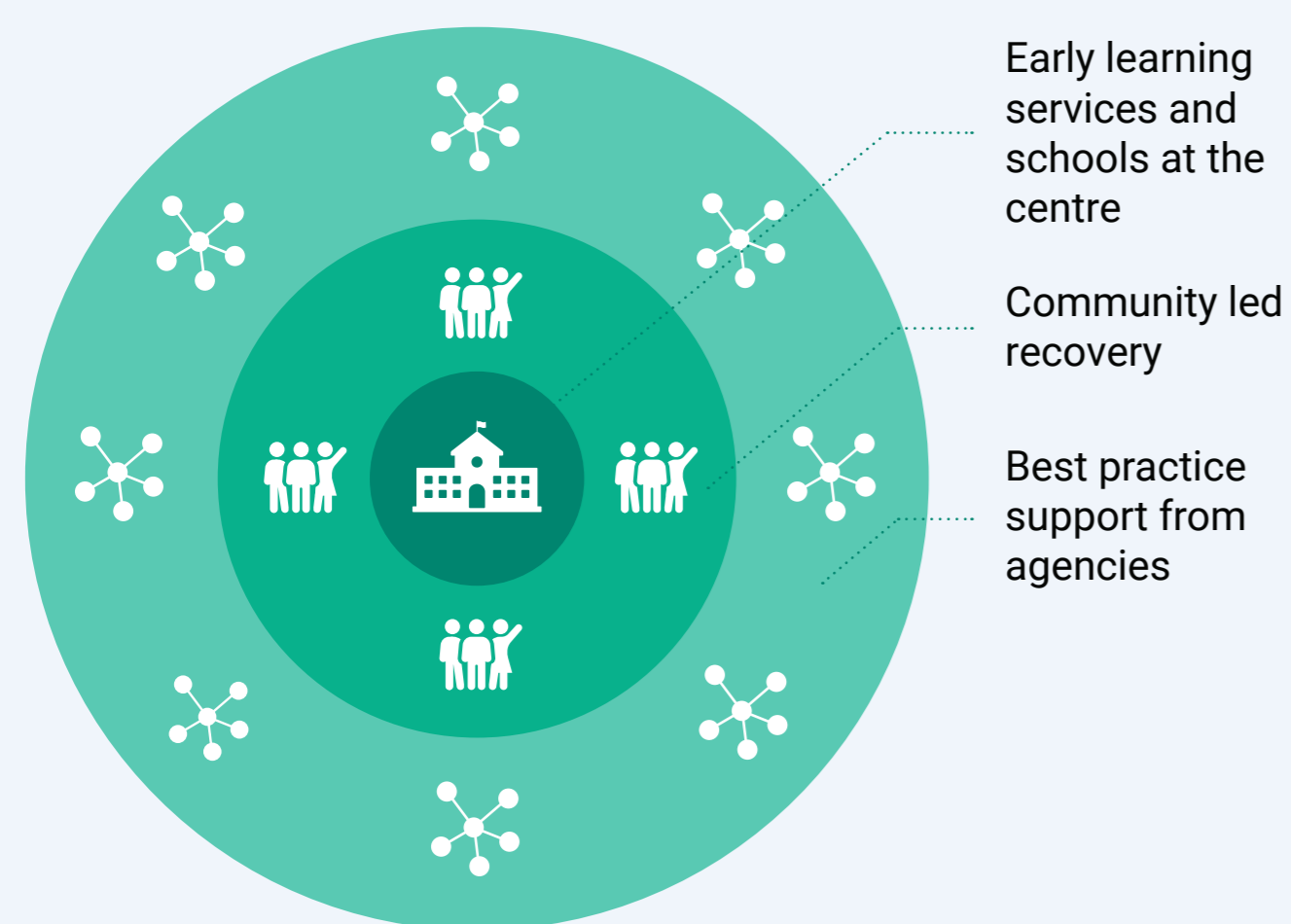
The Be You Bushfire Response Program

The Be You Bushfire Response Program is an innovative model developed in response to the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020. Led by Beyond Blue, with delivery partners Early Childhood Australia, headspace and Emerging Minds, the Program recognises the unique role of learning communities in supporting recovery and resilience after bushfires.



The program model

The Program model and design applies core principles from each of the circles above to a bushfire recovery context, placing educators and learning communities at the centre of all design, delivery, practice and thinking.



Early learning services and schools at the Centre (Be You Bushfire Response Program model, March 2020)

Educators' framework for supporting recovery

The importance of educator wellbeing was highlighted in the Educators' Framework for Supporting Recovery developed by delivery partners Emerging Minds specifically for the Program in 2021.

Learning communities have become increasingly engaged in trauma informed practice, noting its value in better understanding and responding to behaviours they may see in children, young people, families and staff.



Educator Framework for Supporting Recovery (Emerging Minds 2021)

A collaborative partnership

Each organisation in the partnership brings specialist knowledge to the governance, design and implementation of the Be You Bushfire Response Program. The Program facilitated comprehensive stakeholder consultations involving representatives from the mental health, disaster recovery and education sectors. This process promoted greater cross-sector collaboration, identifying the current status and needs of learning communities and highlighting any support service delivery overlaps, gaps and further collaboration opportunities.

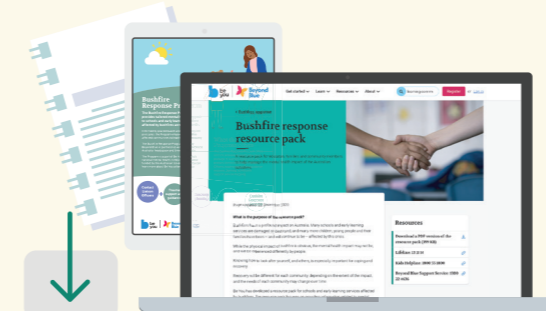
Participation and engagement

Delivered tailored mental health support:

- to over **430 learning communities**
- across **13 bushfire impacted priority regions** in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia



Developed the Bushfire Response Resource Pack, a resource to support early learning services and schools (**4,495 downloads**)



Produced a series of e-learning modules each tailored to the early years, primary and secondary school settings and promoting the role of educators in supporting recovery from trauma



Produced 3 national webinars

- Preparing learning communities for bushfire season
- Understanding trauma responses following a bushfire
- A roadmap to recovery following a bushfire



Facilitated 351 educator wellbeing sessions for educators, early learning service directors and school principals



Supported 1,530 local networking events



Hosted 45 interagency and service provider meetings between March 2020 and May 2021 in 13 priority regions, across 4 states

Evidence

The Program model is based on best practice in community development work in disaster recovery and is underpinned by trauma informed approaches and the National Principles for Disaster Recovery. (Social Recovery Reference Group, Australia 2018)

A **Monitoring and Review** report was prepared in July 2021. The report identifies many successes of the 2020 -2021 Bushfire Response Program including:

- collaboration across the partnerships and when working with communities
- the role of the Contact Liaison Officer and the support provided to learning communities through this role
- flexibility of the Program to respond to individual community needs, readiness and context
- focus on supporting educator wellbeing
- the resources produced to support learning communities.

Next steps

From July 2021 the Be You Bushfire Response Program moved into the next phase of support for bushfire-affected learning communities, providing tailored activities and ongoing support through the national Be You mental health in education initiative.

The findings and recommendations from the Monitoring and Review report will be considered in the delivery of the Program over 2021 - 2022.

Be You Consultants are offering support to early learning services and schools that participated in the Bushfire Response Program. This support includes access to the resources, events and sessions Be You provides. In addition, learning communities will be offered targeted bushfire recovery events, sessions and resources.

There will also be a focus on building collaborative work across the mental health, education and disaster recovery sectors.