

**ATTENTION: News Editors, Chiefs of Staff**

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## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

### **Lawyer urges TAC to show flexibility for bushfire victims**

Any Victorians injured due to motor vehicle accidents during last summer's Black Saturday bushfires have only a week to lodge claims for compensation with the Transport Accident Commission or they could miss out on important entitlements.

The TAC applies a 12 month claim deadline for those directly affected by a transport accident. But law firm Maurice Blackburn is calling on the TAC to show flexibility.

People who can lodge claims include those injured through their own direct involvement, and those who witnessed others' involvement. It can include people who witnessed the aftermath of the event. Partner John Voyage believes there are likely to be a number of eligible people who have not yet lodged claims with the TAC.

"Anyone who was injured in the driving of a vehicle during the bushfires or who has a relative who was a victim as a result of driving should be eligible to lodge a claim with the TAC. They would have a right to compensation including payment of medical and pharmacy expenses, counselling and a financial safety net for any time off work," said Mr Voyage, a lawyer who handles many TAC-related cases.

Mr Voyage is calling on the Commission to relax its normally rigid 12-month rule for those affected by traffic accidents during the bushfires.

"As the first anniversary approaches it will be an even more difficult time for many people and we hope that the TAC will use its discretion with people who haven't been able to lodge compensation claims."

"Recovery from traumatic events like this takes a long time. Many people have been suffering confusion, grief, and an overwhelming sense of loss; and people have been focussed on rebuilding their lives rather than paperwork," said Mr Voyage.

"The TAC can accept claims after the 12 month anniversary. I invite the TAC to confirm that it will help those people to do the paperwork when they are ready," said Mr Voyage.

***For more information and interview requests please contact Amanda Tattam at Maurice Blackburn on 0413 997 467 [atattam@mauriceblackburn.com.au](mailto:atattam@mauriceblackburn.com.au)***