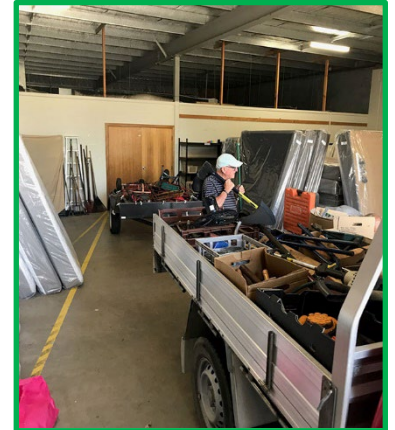




## TOOLS SYMBOLISE REBUILDING

Even though presently we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, early in the year bushfires ravaged our state.

Vinnies volunteers in Ballarat collected tools to take to people affected by these fires in East Gippsland. Ballarat volunteer Alan West said, "It was the thought of those poor people affected by the fires heading back to their properties and trying to work out where to begin when their possessions might be all gone or damaged that prompted the collection. It's a small thing, but having a rake or a shovel again might give them that little impetus to make a start."



Alan and another volunteer, Kevin Elliot, drove the load to Traralgon where the tools were handed over to Vinnies volunteers there to distribute where needed in the fire-affected areas. Alan adds, "We also want to make sure that any money raised is spent at hardware stores in fire towns so that it helps local businesses get back on their feet, too."

It will be a long and challenging road to recovery, and perhaps even longer with pandemic isolation and restrictions but we are here for the long haul, every step of the way.

*Renae Scholte - St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria*

