

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 31st October 2022

RE: RUMBALARA ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVE OPERATIONS DURING FLOOD DISASTER

The towns of Shepparton, Mooroopna, Barmah, Cummeragunja and Echuca have experienced massive disruptions, due to the recent flood disaster. Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative members, community members and the wider community have been heavily affected by this.

As a result, Rumbalara's service delivery sites in Mooroopna, have been impacted – with water damage to our roads, buildings and infrastructure.

With our main sites impacted, Rumbalara quickly identified the need to continue supports to community.

With more than 90% of our staff directly impacted by the floods, Rumbalara has made its priority to provide emergency relief assistance to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community in this region. In conjunction with DFFH – Aboriginal Self-Determination and Outcomes Division team, Rumbalara has been able to develop the following:

Emergency Assistance Hotline – This hotline has provided supports to community members to call in and speak with Rumbalara staff to identify their emergency needs. The Aboriginal Self-Determination and Outcomes Division team would coordinate all supports to successfully deliver to those community members, from food relief to welfare checks. This has been achieved with great supports from Adam Reilly (Executive Direct, DFFH the Aboriginal Self-Determination and Outcomes Division) and his team.

Pop-Up Clinic – Rumbalara Medical Clinic ran a temporary clinic based in Shepparton to provide emergency health care needs to community. The pop-up clinic was fully operational within 48 hours as an additional emergency response. The team were able to provide phone consults as their initial response, then leading to in-person GP/NP consultations. Scripts, Medical supplies, home visits to Elders, medication drop-offs were successfully delivered.

“Following the COVID-19 pandemic to a natural flood disaster, Rumbalara has learnt very quickly how to respond and provide services in an emergency environment. We have learnt along the way and I commend and thank Rumbalara staff for their commitment to our organisation and community”. – said Felicia Dean CEO.

“Working in a highly pressured emergency environment requires a lot of stamina, patience and flexibility as our staff have demonstrated this well. A big thank you and appreciation to the ASDO (Aboriginal Self-Determination and Outcomes Division) team for all of their support, working alongside us to support our emergency response to normal operations. A special mention to VACCHO (Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation) and the Department of Health for the continued support with financial assistance with emergency services. A massive acknowledgement and thank you to all the Rumbalara staff, whilst managing the impacts to themselves and their homes – many staff continued to work, maintaining contact with their clients and community via phones, messenger etc, until they were able to physically return to work”. – said Felicia Dean CEO.

As of Monday 31st October, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative resume majority of our services at our Mooroopna site, including – Medical Clinic, Dental Clinic and Family Services.

All other office sites across Shepparton return to normal.