

YouthCARE Belmont College Chaplain lends support at Australind Evacuation Centre

January 14, 2016

Local Belmont College chaplain Adrian Herbert was part of YouthCARE Pastoral Critical Incident Response (PCIR) team working tirelessly at the Australind Evacuation Centre, offering a listening ear and support to those affected by the tragic bushfires in the state's south-west.

On Thursday, January 7 a lightning strike sparked a devastating fire in the Yarloop region burning thousands of hectares and destroying more than 140 homes and public buildings. In response YouthCARE deployed teams of their PCIR trained chaplains to the Yarloop fire affected area.

Adrian was part of the team of experienced chaplains rotating at the Australind evacuation centre from Friday, January 8 to Wednesday, January 13 offering support, assistance and a listening ear to the hundreds of residents housed at the evacuation centre.

In total, 10 PCIR chaplains worked alongside the government and other agencies to provide pastoral care, emotional and practical support to those affected by the fires. They were mobilised by the Department of Child Protection and Family Support and worked alongside professionals such as psychologists and social workers.

The local YouthCARE chaplain said his role was to support the families housed in the evacuation centre after being displaced from their homes in Yarloop, Harvey and surrounding areas.

"I was there to offer pastoral care and be a listening ear to those who had just been affected by the devastating fires." Making sure they had their immediate needs met and helping them out and guiding them through the process."

Thornlie resident Mr Herbert and his wife Darlene drove to Australind and began their PCIR support role at the evacuation centre on the Sunday, finishing at the centre on Wednesday afternoon. During his time there Mr Herbert helped hundreds of people.

YouthCARE CEO Stanley Jeyaraj said more than 60 YouthCARE chaplains were trained to provide pastoral care and support to those experiencing severe stress resulting from critical incidents such as bushfires.

"Our PCIR trained chaplains offered a gentle support and encouragement, listening to the stories of the young people and their families affected while at the evacuation centre," Mr Jeyaraj said.

Mr Jeyaraj said YouthCARE chaplains based in the local area would offer ongoing support to the school children and families affected in the area.

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