



Financial hardships after the fire, Kinglake

Extract from *Kinglake-350* by Adrian Hyland

Mid winter, the snows arrived. Scattered all over the region were people huddling over tiny radiators in shacks and caravans, the denuded earth around them slushy with ash and mud. Many an anxious glance was cast at the incinerated bush, the grieving neighbours, the mounting bills.

People were horrified by the expense of rebuilding: the new Bushfire Attack Level regulations could add anything from \$100,000 to \$150,000 to the cost of building a house in the flame zone. In some cases it might have doubled the cost—and the increased costs meant most people found themselves underinsured. Many, maybe 30 per cent were not insured at all. The fire was a financial as well as human disaster.

People wondered whether they'd ever again own the roof over their heads. Nothing raised the hackles as much as somebody outside the burn zone asking, 'Things getting back to normal up there yet?'

Many a soul in the Kinglake Ranges wondered if things ever would get back to normal.

Extract recorded and transcript reproduced with permission. ©Adrian Hyland, 2011, The Text Publishing Co Australia