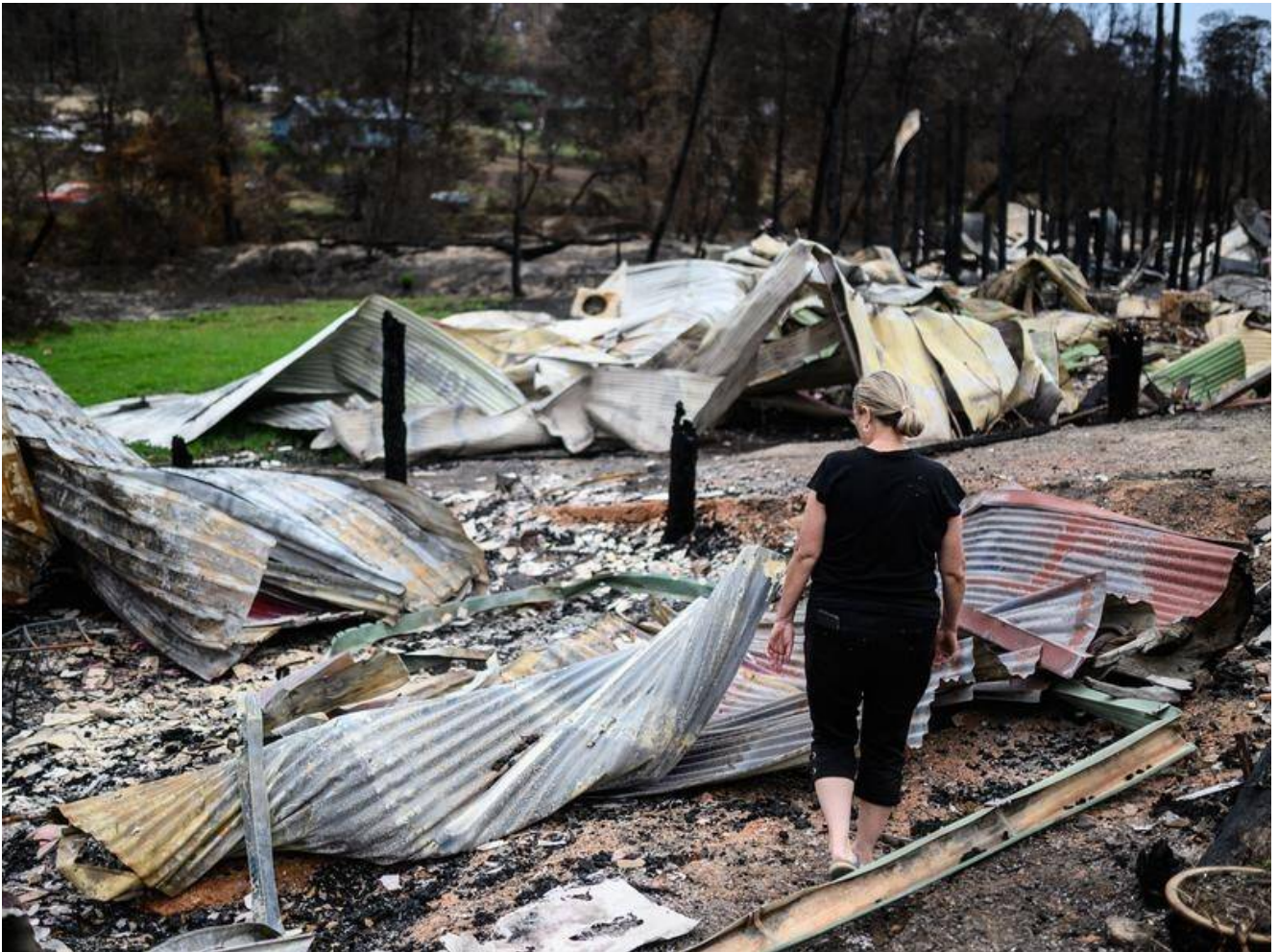


Bushfire trauma 'can linger for years'



The emotional and psychological effects of bushfires can last for years, Australian Red Cross says.

People whose lives were devastated by last summer's bushfires could face increased trauma during the upcoming anniversary, the Australian Red Cross says.

Australian Red Cross national recovery adviser Kate Brady on Wednesday said people often felt a mix of shock, numbness, helplessness, anger, and frustration after a major crisis.

She added that the first anniversary of the bushfires could also bring new emotions to the surface, and encouraged affected people to take good care of

themselves during the New Year period and check in with others to avoid “braving it alone”.

“Dealing with events like this over the longer term can be stressful, and emotionally and physically exhausting,” Dr. Brady said.

Australian Red Cross disaster recovery consultant Rob Gordon said those in bushfire-impacted communities can prepare themselves and take control during an anniversary.

“Anniversaries are a very important part of creating a sense of history,” Dr. Gordon said.

“Putting things into the past helps us to put the present into perspective, allowing us to recover.

“Some people may feel that they don’t want to think about the anniversary because it’s upsetting. But it’s incredibly difficult to avoid acknowledging anniversaries.”

The Australian Red Cross remains committed to its recovery program, which is active in four states, for at least two more years.

The charity has now disbursed or spent \$201 million of the donated \$240 million since the bushfires.

The remaining \$39 million will be spent on further financial support and long-term recovery work.

Australian Associated Press

Source:

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7070836/bushfire-trauma-can-linger-for-years/?cs=14231>

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