

INSIDE DHS' BUSHFIRE RECOVERY INCIDENT CONTROL ROOM

Hundreds of state employees including CPSU Organisers are working at 50 Lonsdale Street (DHS) processing the many Rapid Assessment Forms.

There are public servants from various departments who have come in to do the work, some of whom have worked the week on the same tasks.

The forms were filled out by the army and police forces as they walked from property to property assessing damage.

The forms were from the townships of Hazeldene, Flowerdale, Kinglake West, Kinglake, St Andrews and Strathewen.

Very few of the forms were for houses remaining.

A large number of the forms had blacked out sections, which - I presumed - were reports of bodies found.



There were hundreds of Victorian Public Sector workers in the DHS Incident Control rooms and surrounds working throughout the week and over the weekend processing forms and providing information required by the people working on the ground at the various front lines.

Some of these staff said they had been working up to 14 hour shifts for a fortnight since the first fires began in Gippsland.

They recognised that they were unlikely to get any accolades for their work, and that they were probably going to be the first in line for criticism as those most directly affected by the fires emerge from the sense of crisis and grief they're currently experiencing and start to look to blame people, but said that they would use their training to deal with it.

I left on Saturday afternoon thinking that, with all it's systemic flaws, compromises and weaknesses, the strength of the Victorian Public Sector comes from the quiet, understated and determined commitment of its staff who unassumedly throw themselves headfirst into doing the things that need to be done when they need to be done, knowing full well that there will be no parades, media focus or Prime Ministerial visits for them.

Jason Cleeland