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**ISUZU PROVIDES TRANSPORT SUPPORT FOR BLAZEAID RECOVERY EFFORTS**

Australia is home to many environments, unique with flora, fauna, and the communities that inhabit them.

Living in rural and regional areas of the country holds its manifold attractions but comes tempered with the risk of impacts from bushfires and other severe weather events.

[BlazeAid](https://blazeaid.com.au/) is a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires, floods and severe storms.

The not-for-profit organisation was founded by Rhonda and Kevin Butler, who experienced significant loss of property and livestock first-hand during the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009.

To assist the continued efforts of BlazeAid ahead of the 2024 bushfire season and future recovery efforts, Isuzu Australia Limited (IAL) has contributed two Ready-to-Work Traypack trucks for use as volunteer and equipment transport vehicles.

**Home-grown support**

IAL Sustainability and Compliance Manager, David Kirsanovs, said he hoped the two trucks would help ease the burden of rebuilding for BlazeAid volunteers and those affected.

“With volunteer-based operations such as BlazeAid, having reliable, high-quality equipment can make that much difference to their outreach work, improving efficiency in rebuilding efforts and saving time,” said Mr Kirsanovs.

“Rebuilding after these events can take months or even years, which is where the trucks can provide valuable long-term support to the teams on the ground.

“We recognise the time that BlazeAid and their volunteers invest is an invaluable gift to the communities who are getting back on their feet after such hard times,” he continued.

“Isuzu is grateful to be part of that journey with BlazeAid, and through them, supporting Australian families and people in their time of need.”

**Help on hand**

Tasks undertaken by BlazeAid on rural properties and farms are primarily focused on the repair and replacement of structures, which includes clearing fallen trees, fences and buildings, and general property clean-up.

The two light-duty Ready-to-Work trucks supplied by IAL—which are outfitted with heavy-duty, factory-fitted aluminium trays—are capable of carrying necessary tools, building supplies, and volunteers to site.

Importantly both light-duty trucks sit at a GVM of 4,500 kg, meaning they are driveable on a standard car licence, with an easy-to-use, two-pedal automated manual transmission.

The models are specified with a GCM of 8,000 kg and a towing capacity of up to 4,000 kg, which will assist BlazeAid volunteers in moving trailers and caravans to the base camps used in relief efforts.

**Investing in community**

The organisation now hosts huge numbers of volunteers each year, many of whom travel from overseas.

This is a marked evolution from BlazeAid’s grassroots origins, which began in the Butler's shearing shed in regional Victoria after the Black Saturday bushfires.

With approximately three kilometres of fencing needing replacement, the Butlers faced a lengthy rebuild to complete it themselves, with no way to secure livestock.

Advertising in the local newspaper for assistance, they ended up with 25 volunteers, resulting in fresh fences in under a week.

Inspired by the incredible response of kind-hearted locals, [BlazeAid](https://blazeaid.com.au/) was born.

As of 2024, the organisation has helped over 13,800 properties across Australia, contributing an estimated $400 million towards disaster recovery efforts.

This includes education for community members and replanting of native trees and grasses to help the environmental recovery of areas significantly damaged during fire or flood.

“Communities and councils contact us in their time of need, and we establish a base camp for volunteers, often in places like cricket fields or sports ovals in the town we are supporting,” explained CEO of BlazeAid, Melissa Jones.

“At this stage, BlazeAid has established 215 base camps across Australia to lend a hand in disaster relief. This includes over 38,000 volunteers who have contributed 420,000 days of their time.

“We are deeply thankful to Isuzu Australia for their generous support and contribution. The addition of these two trucks will greatly enhance our capacity to assist rural communities and families in need across Australia.

“With these vehicles, our volunteers will be able to reach and operate in affected areas more efficiently, delivering the essential aid required for rebuilding and recovery.”

BlazeAid’s good work doesn’t stop at the physical aspects of rebuilding; the organisation is also active in building future community resilience and coordinating social activities for farmers and community members with the goal of growing stronger home-grown support through connection.

This remains a primary objective for Kevin and Rhonda, who 15 years on from their own personal disaster and recovery effort, are still focused on paying the favour forward.

“We have had help, now let’s give our neighbours a hand too,” said BlazeAid Founder, Kevin Butler.

**Further information on BlazeAid, including opportunities for support, donation, and volunteering can be found at** [***blazeaid.com.au***](https://blazeaid.com.au/)**.**

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**For further information, please contact: For Isuzu Trucks releases and photos:**

Sam Gangemi Arkajon Communications

Isuzu Australia Limited Phone: 03 9867 5611

Phone: 03 9644 6666 Email: [isuzu@arkajon.com.au](mailto:isuzu@arkajon.com.au)