

Dear Sonic Colleague,

The Australian bushfires represent a crisis of national significance, with devastating impacts on people, property and businesses, as well as on wildlife and the natural environment. The confronting images projected around the world give a clear sense of the magnitude of the situation. The impact of the fires has been most felt in regional communities, where many Sonic staff live and work. Tragically, several of our people have lost their homes, while hundreds more have been directly impacted as a result of the dislocation to their communities.

Throughout the crisis, Sonic staff have continued to provide seamless healthcare services, often in extremely trying conditions. I am incredibly proud of the resilience and courage demonstrated by the many Sonic staff who continue to serve their communities with dedication and care under such difficult circumstances. I particularly want to acknowledge the extraordinarily brave staff members who work selflessly as volunteer firefighters.

As we watch the crisis unfold, it is heartening to see the way in which Australians and international friends have responded in solidarity, with compassion and generosity. Earlier this month, the Australian Government committed at least A\$2 billion towards a national bushfire recovery fund.

Sonic Healthcare is working with its Australian divisions to develop a comprehensive plan to provide short- and long-term assistance where needed. In the first instance, Sonic Healthcare Australia will donate A\$250,000 to be split between the Australian Red Cross Society's Disaster Relief Fund (providing direct emergency assistance to bushfire victims) and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife's Emergency Appeal (targeting injured animals and support for wildlife carers). While this amount will be carried by Sonic's three Australian divisions (Sonic Pathology Australia, Sonic Imaging and Sonic Clinical Services), the donation will be made in the name of Sonic Healthcare, on behalf of all our 36,000 staff worldwide.

In addition, Sonic Healthcare Australia will provide the following practical assistance:

- Emergency cash payments to staff members who have lost their homes
- Regular wages to staff members who volunteer in local community fire services
- Access to professional and confidential counselling and support services for affected staff
- Facilitating fund-raising efforts by Sonic staff around the world, including establishing a bushfire relief appeal (details of how staff can donate to this appeal will be announced shortly)
- Matching staff fundraising efforts, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to A\$100,000
- Donating medical supplies to charities working with injured and displaced animals
- Supporting local practice-based initiatives to provide medical services to individuals and families displaced by the fires

Once again, I want to express my deep admiration and thanks to those who have worked to make a difference during this crisis. Some of the stories I have heard are nothing short of heroic, exemplifying selflessness and camaraderie that make us all proud to be part of Sonic Healthcare.

With my best wishes,

Colin

**Dr Colin Goldschmidt**  
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