

Secretary Of State Warns Of Australian Fire Recovery Scams

By Administrator

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As the world watches devastating wildfires blaze across Australia, there's been an outpouring of donations to aid relief efforts. NC Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall urges North Carolina's giving public to be both generous and wise to make sure their donations do the most good possible.

"We've all been moved by the heartbreaking images coming out of Australia," Secretary Marshall said on Wednesday. "North Carolinians know all too well the destruction and suffering that natural disasters can bring and we all want to reach out to help, but unfortunately natural disasters can also draw out scam artists preying on our goodwill. So please remember that a little research can assure that your contribution is helping those in need."

Visit the NC Secretary of State's Charitable Solicitation Licensing Division at www.sosnc.gov/CSL to research charities registered with the Secretary of State's Office. Charity Navigator has a page dedicated to the Australia bushfires with ratings for some of the organizations involved in relief efforts.

You can also search Australia's charity database at www.acnc.gov.au/charity.

Tips for wise giving:

- Give to established charities with resources on the ground to help the affected regions.
- Watch out for sound-alike charities mimicking the names of established charities.
- Go directly to organizations' official websites instead of clicking on links in unsolicited texts, emails, or social media posts.
- Never give your credit card or bank account information over the phone or email.

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“Please do your research when considering giving through a GoFundMe campaign,” advised Secretary Marshall. “Many may be well-intentioned, but not well-equipped to help in relief and recovery efforts across the effected region.”

If you believe that you have been contacted by a fake charity, take a screen shot of the solicitation or write down the information you remember from the call as soon as possible and immediately contact the Secretary of State’s Office or local authorities. You can reach our Charitable Solicitation Licensing Division at 1-888-830-4989 or file a complaint [online](#) .