DISASTER
COMPLETE AND UTTER DEVASTATION

All Lions will have read the graphic reports in the press, seen the horrifying on the spot coverage on television and listened to the heart breaking stories on radio of the bushfires which ravaged the Southern areas of Australia in mid-February.

But none of that which you have seen from afar conveys the true picture of what it is like in South Australia and Victoria.

No words can describe the absolute destruction, devastation, ravaging of our country side, forests, towns and city suburbs which occurred on and after Black/Ash Wednesday, call it what you like, February 16, 1983.

The old cliche "seen to be believed" seems hardly adequate in this instant. The destruction is unimaginable — stately homes which have stood the test of previous fires and elements for 130 years, erased in minutes, not half an hour, but minutes — the earth under the bushland, not covered with ash but burnt white with the intensity of the heat of the raging inferno which engulfed so much of two States of the Nation.

It is an effort, even for one not affected by the fires, now a week passed, to write about them without shedding a few tears.

It is just too much.

Members of Lions Clubs in devastated areas were individually and collectively involved in the tragic events in many communities directly affected by the holocaust. To them on behalf of the Brotherhood of Lions we not only extend our sympathy for their personal and financial loss as a result of this national tragedy, but pledge both our personal and financial support in the most practicable way available to us.

LION MACHINE SWINGS INTO ACTION

Action in providing assistance to the devastated areas was immediate by Lions International. Within hours of the tragedy ALCERF had made available funds for immediate needs. At the time of going to press with this edition the figure made available by ALCERF had reached $100,000.

This money is administered by Lions, and the disbursement of funds is co-ordinated by the District Governors in the affected areas.

No limit has been put on the amount which may be allocated from ALCERF.

A.L.F. (Australian Lions Foundation) has launched an appeal to Clubs for funds to be used for secondary relief — that is for reconstruction purposes of community facilities destroyed.

Lions are still administering works in Darwin following the destruction brought by Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Day seven years ago.

If ever there was a time to remember our Ethics it is now—"To aid my fellow men by giving my sympathy to those in distress, (for there are many) my aid to the weak, and my substance to the needy."