

MTF, Largest Tissue Bank, Provides Skin for Victims of Australian Wildfires

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Costa Mesa, CA, March 2, 2009 -- The deadliest wildfires in the history of Australia have now killed over 200 people and injured many more. Local medical institutions are filled with those who have escaped the blazes, many with severe burns. The United States' largest tissue bank, the Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation (MTF), has responded to this crisis by providing skin to treat some of those victims in Melbourne, the epicenter of the fires.

The fires, which have been described as "an appalling tragedy" by Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, have resulted in burns, trauma, shock and organ failure. The Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria (DTBV), located in Melbourne, the capitol of Victoria, contacted MTF to provide human skin, which is used to cover severe burns, thus reducing the risk of infection and loss of fluids. DTBV is the largest tissue bank in Australia and the only human skin bank in the state of Victoria, where most of the fires and deaths have occurred.

MTF was quick to respond when the request came from DTBV. After receiving the necessary international clearances, the skin was sent from the United States to Victoria via courier. "We were delighted to assist our friends in Australia with this skin and play a role in helping victims of these tragic fires," said Michael Kawas, President, MTF Skin Division. "Our commitment to caring for those who need tissue does not stop at the U.S. border. We share a common philosophy with DTBV, a dedication to quality and safety." Both MTF and DTBV are non-profit organizations.

Marisa Roma Herson, MD, PhD, head of DTBV, expressed her appreciation for the skin that was provided. "Please relay to all at MTF our thanks for this very important contribution to Australia," she said.

Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation (www.mtf.org), the largest tissue bank in the United States, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. MTF is dedicated to providing quality tissue through a commitment to excellence in education, research, recovery and care for recipients, donors and their families. Since its inception in 1987, MTF has received tissue from more than 80,000 donors and has provided over three million tissue grafts for transplantation.

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