

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Water



Monday, 19 October 2020

## VICTORIA'S FIREFIGHTING AIR FLEET RETURN TO THE SKIES

A record 51 aircraft will hit Victorian skies to help fight fires and keep communities safe this summer season, thanks to \$29 million in funding from the Victorian Government.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville today announced the 2020-21 aircraft fleet, which includes a mix of water bombing aircraft, air supervision and air intelligence-gathering aircraft.

Two Large Air Tankers, which can carry up to 15,000 litres of water, foam or retardant, and two 7500-litre Aircranes, will contribute to the 51 aircraft in the core-fleet and provide essential support to other aircraft across the state.

The fleet includes a number of specialist night vision-enabled aircraft, which can conduct firebombing and intelligence operations after dark and has a surge capacity of up to 100 that can support the Victorian core fleet and be called upon when needed.

Victoria's emergency services are preparing for a normal fire season across the state. However, the location, timing and amount of spring rainfall is likely to affect fire potential in the western half of the state.

Aircraft will provide an immediate response across the state, allowing water bombing aircraft to respond to fires at the same time as fire trucks.

The Victorian fleet was critical in stopping the spread of fire last summer, providing an initial attack from the air in the early stages of fires and supporting firefighters on the ground, including across North East Victoria and East Gippsland.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

*"Victoria's aerial firefighting fleet will return bigger than ever to support our hard-working firefighters and ensure that Victoria has the strongest possible fire response, both in the air and on the ground, as we head into fire season."*

*"Last fire season we saw just how critical aircraft were in responding to fires and protecting life and property – not just in remote areas, but right across the state."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

*"Our forest firefighters do a fantastic job on the ground and our record number of aircraft will support that effort."*

### Quote attributable to Acting Emergency Management Commissioner Chris Stephenson

*"Our 51 aircraft will be strategically positioned across the state and work with our firefighters to help keep communities safe."*