

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Minister for Water



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VICTORIA POLICE AIR WING UPGRADE NOW COMPLETE

Victoria Police's multi-million-dollar Air Wing upgrade is now complete following the delivery of three new helicopters and fixed wing plane that will further elevate response capabilities.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville today joined Victoria Police at Essendon Fields base to tour the completed expansion, as well as the Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) – Drones Unit, which commenced operation in October 2019.

Three Leonardo AW-139 helicopters are equipped with advanced infrared camera and mapping systems, and improved object detection software to assist with marine and land-based searches.

The helicopters have a crew capacity of up to 15, can travel at more than 250 kilometres per hour and have a range of more than 1,000 kilometres.

Adopting many of the same features as the helicopters, the fixed-wing Beechcraft Super King Air 350ER has the added advantage of being able to remain airborne for more than 10 hours without refueling and will be the first plane to be used by Victoria Police for over 20 years.

The completed fleet will allow Victoria Police to move across the state faster and respond to incidents more efficiently – with more police able to take to the skies simultaneously.

This includes Special Operations Group members and the Critical Incident Response Team, who will be able to travel to regional destinations in reduced time. The Major Collision Investigation Unit will also be able to reach road crash victims faster in the new aircraft.

The fleet is a significant expansion to Victoria Police's capabilities in facing emerging threats. They will give police access to state-of-the-art camera and mapping systems, providing valuable intelligence and surveillance and better preparing them to respond to any emergency, rescue operation or threats of violence and terrorism.

The Air Wing Command also oversees the RPAS Unit, which includes three Matrice drones (specialist drones) and 12 Mavic Enterprise drones (general use drones).

The Victoria Police Air Wing Unit assists with around 5,000 requests every year, including regular traffic surveillance, CBD aerial patrols, search and rescue operations, as well as assisting on ground police in targeting and catching suspects.

Funded by the Victorian Government in the *2017/18 Victorian Budget*, the \$63 million fleet upgrade delivers on a commitment from the government's record \$3 billion investment in police.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"These new aircraft are equipped with the latest technology and will provide crucial intelligence that will help our police better respond to unfolding situations."

"We're giving our police the resources they need to keep themselves and the community safe, on the ground and in the skies."

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