

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Minister for Water



Saturday, 21 November 2020

## HONOURING OUR BRAVE FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Today marks one year since Victoria's first Code Red day in nearly a decade, when lightning strikes ignited the bushfires that ravaged East Gippsland and North East Victoria and heralded the start of a devastating fire season.

The damage caused by the 2019-20 bushfires was staggering – with fires burning more than 1.5 million hectares of land, destroying hundreds of properties and causing significant environmental impacts.

Tragically, five people lost their lives during a horror fire season that will remain with Victorians for years to come.

Our firefighters, emergency service workers and the community faced incredibly difficult conditions and challenges that many had not experienced before.

In honour of this courage and dedication, a commemorative pin has been created to acknowledge of all those involved in fighting the blazes that blanketed our state.

The specially designed pin pays tribute to our emergency services workers, volunteers and partner organisations, who so bravely put their own lives on the line to protect their communities.

Designed by a member of the Gunnai and Yorta Yorta people, the pin represents the relationship people have had with the land for a millennia and the Aboriginal practice of 'Caring for Country'.

The pelican 'Boorun' is the father of the Gunnai/Kurnai people of Gippsland and the two animal tracks are the emu and kangaroo from the Australian Coat of Arms.

These are animals that cannot walk backwards and represent a community moving forward as we continue to rebuild and help the land to regenerate once again.

The commemorative pins will be delivered to each of the agencies and community organisations who were involved in the firefighting effort last season, to be distributed among their workers and volunteers over the coming month.

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

*"Today is a time to reflect and give thanks to all those who worked tirelessly in firefighting, support and recovery roles during the devastating fire season.*

*"We will never forget what they did for our state, and this pin is a small token of all Victorians' appreciation for their incredible efforts."*

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

*"The impact and damage caused by the 2019-20 bushfires in Victoria – to property, wildlife and communities – was extensive and ongoing".*

*"We thank all our emergency service agencies who went above and beyond in dangerous circumstances to keep their community safe."*