



The Hon Danny Pearson MP

Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Thursday, 20 May 2021

SUPPORTING FIRST RESPONDERS TO KEEP VICTORIANS SAFE

New and upgraded facilities and resources for police and emergency services will help keep Victorians safe across our state, including an additional relief package to assist recovery from the bushfires last summer.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* will build on Victoria's ability to respond to natural disasters, with a \$138.8 million over seven years to replace CFA radio equipment with modern digital technology, strengthening brigades' emergency response and keeping volunteers safe.

A further \$19.9 million will clean up contaminated sites neighbouring the former Country Fire Authority Training College at Fiskville and begin development of a redress scheme, providing justice for those who were affected by toxic chemicals at the site.

Bolstering this will be \$9.8 million to ensure frontline Fire Rescue Victoria firefighters have the capability to safely respond to dangerous chemical incidents – upgrading personal protective equipment, and improving training, technology, detection and predictive systems.

Acknowledging and building on the work of our dedicated emergency service workers, \$70.6 million is provided for critical programs and increased demand for Life Saving Victoria, the State Control Centre, Emergency Management Victoria and the Emergency Services Telecommunication Authority.

An additional \$39.2 million will further support critical upgrades to VicEmergency and other information systems, and progress emergency management reforms, like improving cross-border arrangements and communications, and investing in the Australian Fire Danger Rating System.

To ensure our emergency services have the dedicated spaces and resources they need to continue their incredible work, \$28 million will go towards upgrading local facilities.

This includes the development of Life Saving Victoria's Point Lonsdale Beach Base and the Wonthaggi and Williamstown Life Saving clubhouses, and delivery of a Victoria State Emergency Service unit in Port Fairy.

Local CFA brigades will also benefit with the replacement of the Irymple, Serpentine and Metcalfe stations, upgrades and refurbishment of the Doreen station and new equipment for Edithvale station, while also supporting local jobs.

Those who experienced last year's devastating bushfires will receive ongoing support to assist their recovery. A \$104.4 million funding package will go towards a range of services and supports to help people in these areas rebuild their lives, livelihoods and communities.

The funding includes support for reconstruction, financial counselling, mental health services, family violence prevention and intervention, legal services, services for Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owners, tourism, land and water management, and business recovery.

More than \$28.8 million will replace the Benalla police station to ensure the hardworking local police have a state-of-the-art facility to serve their community.

Since coming to government we've invested a record \$3.8 billion in Victoria Police to ensure it has the resources, powers, and technology it needs to keep Victorians safe and remain an agile and responsive police force.

An \$82.7 million investment will support the Victorian Fixated Threat Assessment Centre to assess and respond to serious threats of violence – reducing the risk of physical attacks and increasing the number of complex needs individuals that police can identify and support with appropriate mental health services.

Funding of \$13.2 million over two years for continuation of additional 50,000 roadside drug tests each year to improve road safety and reduce the rate of drug driving in Victoria. The funding will increase police capacity and capability, and lead to ongoing research into drug driving.

Efforts to counter violent extremism will be supported by almost \$16.5 million to improve cross-agency collaboration and intelligence sharing, as well as diversion programs to help Victoria Police identify people at risk of radicalisation.

Almost \$6.4 million will help continue the Embedded Youth Outreach program, connecting at-risk young people to services that aim to prevent crime.

The Budget will also build on efforts to stamp out sex discrimination, sexual harassment and assault in the police force, with \$42.1 million to continue the Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme for Victoria Police employees.

The scheme offers financial redress payments, counselling and support to eligible participants, as well as a restorative engagement program to drive cultural change within the organisation. This investment delivers on the 2019-20 Community Safety Statement's commitment to improve Victoria Police's workplace health and wellbeing.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services Danny Pearson

"We're providing support to help our dedicated emergency workers and police deliver the modern, effective and fast response all Victorians deserve."

"We're doing this with better infrastructure, improved operations and equipment, and making sure that first responders have everything they need to do their jobs safely."

"This Budget is continuing support for Victorian communities still recovering from the bushfires. This is a difficult and emotional journey for these Victorians, but one they will not make on their own."