

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Tuesday, 11 January 2022

CHINOOK LANDS IN VICTORIA'S AERIAL FIREFIGHTING FLEET

The latest addition to Victoria's firebombing fleet is ready to hit the skies to support firefighting efforts across the state and help keep communities safe this summer.

The new CH47 Chinook firefighting helicopter, capable of holding 11,000 litres of water, landed last week for Victoria's high-risk weather season and forms part of a 50-strong fleet which has greater flexibility and firebombing capacity than ever before.

It can operate through the hottest part of the day and continue into the night, to give firefighters the best chance to put fires out.

The fleet includes two Large Air Tankers (LAT), one of which is new to Victoria. Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes joined Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp to inspect the new LAT at Avalon Airport.

The new LAT can travel faster and require less room for take-off and landing than previous air tankers, making it more accessible to smaller regional airfields and therefore more agile to respond to changing risks across the state.

The new additions ensure a more modern fixed wing and helicopter fleet, with technically advanced systems, critical to supporting our firefighters to keep communities safe.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$29 million in the 2021-22 fleet, which includes a mix of firebombing aircraft, air supervision and air intelligence-gathering aircraft, with a surge capacity of up to 100 that can support the Victorian core fleet and be called upon when needed.

Victorians should check daily Fire Danger Ratings via the VicEmergency app and take action to minimise fire risk. For more information on how you can plan and respond to fire, visit vic.gov.au/how-well-do-you-know-fire.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"The upgraded firefighting fleet provide vital aerial support to our crews on the ground, responding quickly to major incidents across the state – the Chinook is an exciting addition for the worst of the fire season."

"With a record-capacity aviation fleet and thousands of firefighters ready to respond, our hardworking crews are well prepared to protect Victorians this summer."

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio

"It's vital that people across the state are prepared for the possibility of fires – whether they're at home, visiting family or friends, or away on holidays."

Quote attributable to Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp

"We've already seen how important aircraft are in the firefight to support firefighters and keep the community safe. We'll be doing everything we can and we're asking for the community to do their part too; download the VicEmergency app to stay informed of the fire risk and any changing conditions."