

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Saturday, 12 February 2022

## GRANTS TO HELP EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS GROW

Emergency services brigades and groups across the state will get further support to boost their volunteer numbers and help their existing ones develop professionally thanks to grants from the Andrews Labor Government.

The annual Valuing Volunteers Program grants recognise the vital role volunteers play in the emergency management sector and provides funding to support state-wide initiatives.

This year, \$1.38 million will support 28 programs across emergency services organisations, which will help them retain and recruit new volunteers so they can continue their vital work. Since 2015, the Labor Government has provided almost \$9.69 million for the grants program.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today visited the Werribee CFA Brigade, to announce and congratulate the successful grant recipients.

This year, the CFA received \$539,000 across four projects including \$300,000 to keep putting on the CFA Firefighter Championships – a program that sharpens training in firefighting techniques, fitness development, discipline, teamwork and leadership.

The Championships are one of CFA's proudest and longest traditions. They have been held annually for almost 150 years with the first State Championship held in Melbourne in 1874. Training for the championships at the Werribee Fire Brigade and other brigades is already in full swing.

The Emergency Services Foundation has received \$90,000 for its Mental Health Matters project, a series of workshops that will help volunteers and their loved ones better understand and respond to mental health issues.

Further supporting the mental health of volunteers, VICSES has received \$280,000 for programs to help volunteers improve their physical and mental capacity, and to help all members make healthy lifestyle choices.

Emergency services personnel are more likely than others in the community to suffer serious and debilitating mental health injuries due to their exposure to trauma while attending rescues and other incidents.

Life Saving Victoria received \$275,000 for 18 projects including \$14,000 for its Female Leadership Advancement Project, helping more women take on more operational and leadership roles.

Marine Search and Rescue also received \$200,000, with \$144,000 going to the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and \$56,000 going to support independent volunteer MSAR units.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

*“Our emergency services have had some of the most challenging years in recent memory – that’s why we’ll always back volunteers to help them grow both professionally and in numbers so they can keep helping Victorians.”*

*“Being an emergency services volunteer is incredibly rewarding – we want to keep encouraging more people to join their local brigades and to help develop the skills of those who are already on board.”*

### Quote attributable to Member for Werribee Tim Pallas

*“Werribee is a safer and better place thanks to the selfless work of our local brigades and groups. These grants will support their vital efforts and attract even more locals to this worthwhile work keeping the community safe.”*

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