

Statement

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MP

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Wednesday, 29 March 2023

STATEMENT FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire Rescue Commissioner Ken Block has advised the Victorian Government that due to personal circumstances he is stepping down from his role as the head of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), effective 29 March 2023.

Mr Block has returned to Canada due to significant health issues with his family and wishes to put his family first. He has advised the Government that for this reason he is unable to continue his role in Victoria.

FRV Deputy Commissioner Gavin Freeman will continue to act as Fire Rescue Commissioner until a permanent commissioner is appointed.

Mr Freeman is a highly experienced leader with more than 35 years of experience in emergency management.

He also spent more than 30 years in the Tasmania Fire Service where he held several senior roles, including Deputy Chief Officer, and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2011.

Mr Block started as Victoria's inaugural Fire Rescue Commissioner in 2020 and has been instrumental in establishing and leading FRV.

Mr Block has served as a firefighter since 1980 and previously served as Chief Fire Officer of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services, as well as President of the Metropolitan Association of Fire Chiefs and President of the Canadian Association of Fire Chief's prior to his appointment to FRV.

FRV has brought together the state's career firefighters under a single organisation while allowing the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to be restored to a fully volunteer firefighter organisation.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"Mr Block has been instrumental in establishing and leading Fire Rescue Victoria. He has built a highly professional emergency services agency, bringing professional firefighters together under one organisation with community safety at its core."

"I would like to thank Mr Block for his commitment and dedication to the role and wish him and his family all the best for the future."