

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**  
Minister for Environment  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Friday, 13 October 2023

## FOREST FIREFIGHTERS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BUSHFIRE RESPONSE

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) is stronger than ever ahead of the upcoming bushfire season with a significant boost to its workforce and rapid response capability.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos today announced the Allan Labor Government has bolstered crew numbers to combat bushfires – investing \$21.7 million to create 100 ongoing and 54 fixed term Forest Fire Operations Officer positions, adding to the 550 seasonal firefighters recruited to work with FFMVic this season.

The resources boost means more boots on the ground to respond and reduce the risk of bushfire to communities through planned burns, mechanical fuel treatments and maintenance of our strategic fuel break network.

The recent firefighter recruitment builds an 1800-strong force of FFMVic personnel on the frontline – so alongside other partner agencies, departments and volunteers, Victoria will have more than 62,800 people in fire and emergency roles for this upcoming bushfire season.

The workforce prepares and responds to bushfires all year round – between 1 July and 30 September of this year, FFMVic firefighters responded to 142 fires, which is just below the 10-year average of 148 during the same period.

FFMVic also supports a range of emergency response activities including Victoria's recent floods and deployment to Canada to combat wildfires.

Victorians are encouraged to do their part to stay safe this bushfire season by preparing their properties, making a Bushfire Plan and staying up to date on emergency information and warnings.

For more information, visit [emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare](https://emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

*“Living with a changing climate means bushfires are occurring more often and are more intense – that’s why we are investing in our forest firefighters who are at the frontline of protecting our communities and environment.”*

*“It has been a pleasure meeting with some of our forest firefighters and learning more about the special skills and equipment they use to reduce bushfire risk and respond to fires.”*

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

*“Our emergency management services are well prepared for the upcoming bushfire season and I urge all Victorians to be ready too.”*

### Quote attributable to Forest Fire Management Victoria Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman

*“Victoria will always have bushfires, but we can assure communities that when a bushfire starts, FFMVic is ready to respond – we work every day to reduce bushfire risk to communities.”*

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