

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



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AERIAL FIREFIGHTING FLEET READY TO KEEP VICTORIANS SAFE

Victoria's aerial firefighting fleet of helicopters, air tankers and planes are ready to take to the skies and protect Victorians this fire season, with new additions to the fleet.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes and Emergency Management Commissioner Rick Nugent joined aerial crews and firefighting staff at Melbourne Avalon Airport today to unveil and inspect the fleet.

A total of 51 firefighting aircraft makes up the fleet – more than last year's contingent. The fleet includes a mix of firebombing aircraft, air attack supervision and airborne information gathering aircraft.

The new addition to Victoria's base fleet is a second Aircrane, a high-capacity Type 1 helicopter with the capacity to carry 10,000 litres of water and pick up seawater.

Two Large Air Tankers return to Victoria, which can operate from smaller regional airports as they require less room for take-off and landing, making them more agile to move around the state as the fire risk changes.

A Super Puma firebombing helicopter with a capacity of 2,500 litres leads the night operations program, with its ability to fight fires into the night.

Victoria also has a surge capacity of up to 100 aircraft that can supplement the core fleet and can be called upon when needed.

The aircraft are an important support service for the tens of thousands of dedicated emergency services workers from the CFA, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Fire Rescue Victoria, VICSES and many other agencies.

It complements the thousands of hardworking volunteers and trucks on the ground who are ready to turn out to fires this summer, protecting their communities.

Victorians can expect increased fire risk in central and western Victoria, along the Surf Coast and in East Gippsland. Fire safety is everyone's responsibility and Victorians should be using this time to prepare themselves and their homes.

For more information on how to prepare for fires and other emergencies, download the VicEmergency app or visit emergency.vic.gov.au. For the first time in Victoria, communities can also create a fire plan online, customised to their needs and sharable with family and friends via fireplanner.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"The 51-strong fleet is another tool for hardworking crews to help protect Victorians, no matter where they live."

"Our aircraft will support our firefighters on the ground to help keep the community safe – but we need everyone to do their part to by being ready to act and respond to the fire risk."

Quotes attributable to Emergency Management Commissioner Rick Nugent

"Victorians are no stranger to concurrent and converging emergencies and our aviation fleet remains to be an important asset alongside our hardworking and dedicated firefighters."

"It's important for Victorians to be prepared for fires and other emergencies, have a plan and never rely on one source of information."

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