

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Thursday, 14 March 2024

THOUSANDS OF NEW AND IMPROVED RADIOS FOR CFA BRIGADES

Volunteer firefighters will be able to respond more efficiently to emergencies with the roll out of 18,000 new radios to all Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades across Victoria.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today joined volunteers from Plenty Fire Brigade at the CFA headquarters in Burwood to officially announce the \$138 million upgrade of all handheld, vehicle and station base radios.

The new radios have Global Positioning System (GPS) functions on all handheld devices, making it easier for crews to locate firefighters on the ground and ensure their own safety.

Volunteer firefighters will now also have direct communication access with all emergency service agencies in Victoria with the radio's multiband capability, not just other CFA volunteers. They will also be able to speak with crews from New South Wales and South Australia.

This function will be particularly valuable during mass fire events where more than one agency is deployed such as Fire Rescue Victoria or VICSES, or where interstate crews are deployed to events such as fires that cross state borders.

Last March, 15 CFA districts across the state including Plenty Fire Brigade participated in a three-month pilot program with Motorola Solutions to determine the right radios for the replacement program.

Volunteers from all CFA regions were consulted to assess the radios by testing their functions in simulated, real-life scenarios, including hot, smoke filled and noisy environments, and while wearing a breathing apparatus.

The services contract between CFA and Motorola will be for 10 years. The rollout of the radio replacement program is set to begin in mid-2024 and be complete by the end of 2025.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"These new radios have undergone a trial by fire – tested by volunteers who know what they need in the face of disaster. It's really exciting to kickstart the rollout of these important devices for all our brigades."

"Our CFA volunteers go above and beyond to keep Victorian communities safe from disasters – we're continuing to back this important work with record funding and support."