

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Friday, 19 April 2024

HELPING EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS GET THE EQUIPMENT THEY NEED

The Allan Labor Government is continuing its proud support of our hardworking volunteer emergency services with the equipment and upgrades they need to keep Victorians safe.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today joined local volunteers to officially announce the opening of applications for this year's \$15 million Victorian Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) and thank them for helping during the response to the October 2022 flood event.

VESEP is an annual grant program that supports Victorian emergency services volunteer groups to purchase essential equipment or make facility improvements so that they can continue their vital work.

The Echuca unit received more than \$19,000 in last year's round of grants to upgrade the changeroom facilities, and more than \$68,000 in 2021 towards the purchase of a new utility vehicle.

The Echuca VICSES unit, Echuca CFA brigade and Echuca Moama Search & Rescue squad were instrumental in assisting the local community and surrounds during the October 2022 flood event. The volunteers worked day and night alongside each other to provide aid to residents struggling with rising floodwaters.

Under the program, volunteer groups can purchase equipment including generators, pumps, utility vehicles, light and medium tankers, and rescue trucks. They can also fund minor refurbishments or amenity upgrades to their station, club or unit.

Groups can apply for a grant up to a maximum of \$150,000, with the Government providing \$2 for every \$1 of funding contributed by the local volunteer group.

Since 2015, the Labor Government has invested more than \$123 million in VESEP grants to volunteer groups across the state, enhancing volunteer operational capability and service delivery to communities. This year's VESEP applications are now open and close Friday 14 June 2024.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"Victoria's emergency service volunteers go above and beyond to protect the community during an emergency. These grants are all about helping ensure they have the latest equipment to do what they do best – protect communities and save lives."

"These grants have been going for more than twenty years – we're proud to continue the legacy that they leave and I encourage all eligible groups to apply."