

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

Minister for Medical Research



Wednesday, 15 July 2026

HELPING EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKERS RECOVER SOONER

Emergency services workers are exposed to traumatic events every day to keep Victorians safe.

That's why the Labor Government is delivering the mental health care and support they deserve.

Deputy Premier and Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC Ben Carroll today announced \$2.25 million for an Australian-first partnership with the Emergency Services Foundation to help emergency workers recover from mental injury.

The Residential Wellbeing Program will help workers from Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Triple Zero Victoria and Fire Rescue Victoria process trauma, rebuild confidence and get back to work sooner and safer.

Research shows the longer someone is off work, the less likely they are to return.

That's why this program gets in early – with support built for emergency workers by peers who understand them.

Injured workers will step away from day-to-day pressures and recover alongside people who have lived the same experiences – something no existing service offers.

The program combines proven therapies with practical resilience skills in a safe, structured residential setting.

Expert facilitators will deliver the program, working hand-in-hand with each worker's support network.

Twenty four programs will be delivered over two years – supporting around 160 emergency services workers.

Only Labor will always back workers with real support when they need it most.

Jess Wilson's \$40 billion in cuts can't happen without cutting support for the workers who keep Victorians safe.

The trial is funded through WorkSafe's Return to Work Innovations program.

For more information visit rwp.esf.com.au.

Quote attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC Ben Carroll

"Emergency services workers put their mental health on the line every day to keep Victorians safe – we're making sure they get the support they deserve."

Quote attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward

"The mental wellbeing of our first responders is just as important as their physical safety. That's why we're investing in specialist support so they can recover sooner and return to the work they're passionate about, safely."

Quote attributable to WorkSafe Chief Executive Officer Cathy Henderson

"By testing new approaches like this, we are building a stronger evidence base for what works best to support safe recovery and return to work."

Quote attributable to Emergency Services Foundation Chief Executive Officer Siusan McKenzie

Media contact: Max Resic 0435 256 250 | max.resic@minstaff.vic.gov.au

"In emergency services, the work is deeply meaningful – so getting people back to work sooner and safely is incredibly beneficial to both them and the wider community."