

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Emergency Services



Saturday, 8 September, 2018

## VICTORIAN EMERGENCY WORKERS RETURN FROM DEVASTATING US FIRES

Victorian emergency management personnel responding to wildfires in the United States will be welcomed home today.

Seventeen Victorians from CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria (Parks Victoria and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) are returning to Melbourne after a 37-day deployment.

Victorian personnel were joined by crews from New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia as part of a 140-member Australian and New Zealand contingent that was based in 12 locations across Northern California and in the northwest of the United States.

The wildfires devastated a number of areas, with more than 730,000 hectares burnt across 14 states. Almost 16,000 firefighters have battled as many as 97 separate fires.

The deployment has provided valuable assistance to the local fire response and reinforced the already strong Victorian and Californian relationship. An agreement to support this has been in place since July 2015.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services James Merlino**

*“This dedicated contingent from Victoria has joined up seamlessly with teams of firefighters across the US to help manage fire in Northern California and northwest of the US and should be very proud of their efforts.”*

*“This deployment has been both positive and rewarding for our Victorian firefighters and personnel, who bring back significant knowledge and experience to share with colleagues back home.”*