

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Water

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 4 December 2018

VICTORIA'S LARGEST EVER FIREFIGHTING FLEET TAKES TO THE SKIES

A 49-strong aerial firefighting fleet has jetted into Victoria in time for summer, thanks to a \$29.9 million investment from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Emergency Services Lisa Neville and Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio joined Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp today to officially launch the state's biggest-ever fleet, as well as the Government's summer-fire awareness campaign.

The 2018-19 fleet has expanded water-bombing ability, increased water capacity and upgrades to the existing aircraft models.

It features a mix of water-bombing helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, including:

- two Large Air Tankers (which hold between 12,000 and 15,000 litres of water, retardant or foam)
- two Air Cranes (each with a 7500-litre capacity)
- two aircraft – based in Wimmera and Ballarat – that have been upgraded with a larger water capacity to better protect the north and west of the state.

Other designated aircraft will perform air-supervision and intelligence-gathering roles, with two water-bombing providers to conduct night-time operations this summer, after successfully completing an Australia-first trial.

Victoria will continue to operate water-bombing aircraft so that they can respond to fires at the same time as firefighters on the ground.

The state's summer-fire campaign will also now begin with targeted advertisements to be distributed throughout the state via TV, radio, print, social media and outdoor billboards, in order to promote important safety messages about the risk of bushfires and grass fires.

Victorians can stay up-to-date with emergency warnings throughout the summer season by tuning into local radio and Sky News broadcasts, phoning the VicEmergency hotline on 1800 226 226, visiting emergency.vic.gov.au and downloading the VicEmergency App.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"We know we have a hot and dangerous summer ahead and that's why we're backing our hardworking firefighters with the biggest ever firefighting fleet Victoria has ever seen."

"These specialist aircraft will provide crucial support to our crews on the ground this summer, responding immediately to major incidents right across the state."

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're providing our firefighters with the world-class equipment they need to ensure they can keep Victorians safe."

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