



MEDIA RELEASE

embargoed 1 March 2020

Women in emergency management unite for International Women's Day

Women across the emergency management sector will be celebrated on International Women's Day, at a special event hosted by Victoria's *Emergency Services Foundation*.

The *International Women's Day Forum*, on Sunday 8 March, will be officially opened by Governor of Victoria the Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Patron of the *Emergency Services Foundation*.

For the first time, it will bring together women from across Victoria's emergency management sector to put a gender lens on the mental health and wellbeing of those women who serve and protect our state.

"These are women who care deeply about our community, who contribute greatly to it and who are supported by their families to do this important work," says Siusan MacKenzie, *Emergency Services Foundation* CEO.

"These women make the difference between life and death every day, so it is deeply alarming that one-in-three emergency workers suffer anxiety, depression and suicide. Bushfires over this summer have shown the impact of such events on our first responders and others involved in emergency management. *International Women's Day* is an opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifices they make and show that we care about improving their mental health and wellbeing."

Attending the *ESF's International Women's Day Forum* will be female personnel from *Victoria Police*, *Ambulance Victoria*, *Country Fire Authority*, *Metropolitan Fire Brigade*, *SES*, *St John Ambulance Australia*, *Emergency Management Victoria*, *Inspector-General Emergency Management*, *ESTA (000)*, *Bushfire Recovery Victoria*, *Red Cross* and *Life Saving Victoria*.

Speakers include *Beyond Blue* Director Johanna Griggs and IWD Ambassador, author Carol Fox.

Following the *IWD Forum*, a tribute to women in Victoria's emergency sector will be included in the *T20 Women's Cricket World Cup Final* pre-game entertainment, featuring US performer Katy Perry, at the MCG.

The *Emergency Services Foundation* represents the health and wellbeing of Victoria's 125,000 emergency paid staff and volunteers, of which approximately 45,000 are women.







Photo caption L to R: Donna Fenech (VICSES), Amy Kimber (ESTA 000), Rowena Doo (Bushfire Recovery Vic), Kylie Venardos (CFA), Chennell Allan (St John's), Kathy Cooney (Red Cross), Bianca Vernon (Ambulance Vic), Rachael Knight (Vic Police), Deb Abbott (Emergency Management Vic), Allyson Lardner (Forest Fire and Regions, DELWP), Bec Harding (MFB), Grace Grech (Inspector-General for Emergency Management), Marie van der Weert (Vic Council of Churches Emergencies Ministries), Jess Sincock (Life Saving Vic)

For further information, go to <https://esf.com.au/>



Media contact: Jodie Harrison jodie@theshannoncompany.com.au 0425 754 370

Available for media interviews:

	Siusan MacKenzie – CEO Emergency Services Foundation Former communications executive for CFA and Victoria’s workplace health & safety campaigns.		Debra Abbott APM – Deputy Commissioner Emergency Management Victoria Former Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner State Emergencies and Security Command.
	Catherine Dunlop – Deputy Chair ESF/Lawyer. Catherine has worked with Australian emergency service and law enforcement clients in major inquiries for over 20 years.		Aimee Haywood – Forest and Fire Operations, DEWLP. Experienced in the field and control centre management. Lost her family home to a bushfire as a child. CFA volunteer for 20 years.
	Deb Martindale – Board Director ESF. Worked in emergency services over 20 years including with CFA, Victoria Police and the Vic Bushfires Reconstruction and Recovery Authority.		Christine Carty – CFA volunteer 16 years. “Our entire family is part of the brigade.”

For media enquiries, images and interviews: Jodie Harrison 0425 754 370 jodie@theshannoncompany.com.au

Victorian emergency services fast facts:

- Victoria is served by 125,000 emergency workers, including approximately 100,000 volunteers¹
- Around 45,000 of Victoria’s emergency workers are women¹
- They respond to, on average, 7000 calls each day made to the Triple Zero (000) emergency line in Victoria⁴
- 1 in 3 emergency workers suffer anxiety, depression and suicide² (national average is 1 in 8)
- More emergency workers retire for medical reasons, including mental health issues, than those working outside the sector.³

Agency	Total workforce	Women	Women %
VicPol	21292	7194	34%
CFA	57320	13448	23%
MFB	2388	273	11%
SES	5317	1774	33%
Ambulance Vic	4961	2381	48%
DELWP (Forest Fire)	2500	625	25%
ESTA 000	895	595	66%
Red Cross	3000	50	50%
Lifesaving Vic	35450	15000	50%

References:

¹ Figures as provided by Emergency Management Victoria. Includes volunteers from agencies Ambulance Victoria, CFA, Life Saving Victoria, VicSES, Red Cross, Salvation Army, St John Ambulance, Vic Council of Churches Emergency Ministry
² Beyond Blue’s Answering the Call (2018) national survey of police and emergency service workers
³ Varker et al (2018)
⁴ Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA 000)

About ESF – Better together <https://esf.com.au/>

The Emergency Services Foundation (ESF) was established following the Ash Wednesday bushfires in 1983. It exists to support Victoria’s key emergency management personnel including Victoria Police, Melbourne Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Services and Forest Fire Vic. It does this by uniting the emergency management agencies to be ‘better together’; driving research, fostering innovation and forming partnerships to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria’s 125,000 emergency workers as well as their families.

For further information, go to <https://esf.com.au/>



Media contact: Jodie Harrison jodie@theshannoncompany.com.au 0425 754 370