

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Friday, 7 June 2024

## **NEW AND IMPROVED TANKERS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

The Allan Labor Government is making sure our hardworking firefighters get home safely when protecting Victorians – by replacing or upgrading every single Country Fire Authority (CFA) ultra-light tanker.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today visited the CFA State Logistics Centre in Scoresby with members of the Upper Beaconsfield Fire Brigade to announce that every ultra-light tanker or similar vehicle will be retrofitted or replaced.

Ultra-light tankers are highly effective tools during grassfires and bushfires, as their smaller size allows volunteer firefighters to reach areas that larger tankers are not able to, such as farm paddocks.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$3 million to retrofit all 246 existing ultra-light tankers with internal protections that are now standard on all new tankers.

The retrofitted vehicles have new crew protection systems, including compressed air foam-based deluge to suppress fires, and radiant heat shield curtains to ensure volunteers inside the vehicle are sheltered from extreme temperatures.

These extra features and investment are vital to protect firefighters while they protect communities and have been informed by feedback from experts to be suitable for Victorian fire conditions.

The retrofit includes internal cabin storage for fire blankets, making them more accessible in the event of a burn-over. Some plastic elements of the vehicle have also been replaced with more durable materials such as steel or aluminium.

The additional crew protection systems have been exposed to real fire and significant testing over several years to ensure they can protect volunteers during an emergency.

A further \$5 million will also deliver 33 new ultra-light tankers as part of the Labor Government's ongoing investment into upgrading CFA's extensive fleet.

The new ultra-light tankers will have the same crew protection systems as the retrofitted vehicles, feature a 550-litre water tank and can seat two volunteers.

CFA volunteers receive training each year to ensure they are familiar with any changes in the tankers, including how to operate the crew protection systems.

The upgrade rollout is underway now, with work expected to be completed by the end of the year. The new ultra-light tankers will begin rolling out in next year.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes**

*"Our firefighters put their lives on the line every day for the safety of Victorian communities – these upgrades mean we're keeping them as safe as possible too."*

*"The ultra-light tankers make up an important part of our fleet – ensuring an agile response to grassfires and areas that are hard to reach when our heavier trucks can't get there."*

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