

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Thursday, 5 December 2024

## **MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR OUR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The Allan Labor Government is making sure emergency services staff and volunteers have access to tailored mental health and wellbeing supports.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes announced a new \$1 million Mental Wellbeing Grant initiative to be shared across five of our agencies.

The initiative is part of the Labor Government's Emergency Responders Health Program which aims to strengthen mental wellbeing supports and projects for emergency workers and volunteers.

Life Saving Victoria (LSV) has received a grant of \$200,000 to launch a cultural development initiative focused on inclusivity, respect, and psychological safety for volunteers and staff.

The project will include education and training across age groups, peer-support and enhanced mental health resources for our lifesavers.

Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue units will also benefit from a grant of \$180,000 to develop a statewide Marine Search and Rescue mental health and wellbeing strategy. This long-term strategy will support the diverse organisations and volunteers who undertake this challenging and often traumatising work.

The grants will also fund projects to support emergency responders at Ambulance Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

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

*"Our emergency service workers and volunteers work hard every day to protect the community – that's why we're ensuring they're able to look after their mental health so they can continue their critical work."*

### **Quote attributable to Emergency Management Commissioner Rick Nugent**

*"I look forward to continuing to support our first responders through the Mental Wellbeing Grant Initiative and extend my gratitude to all of our emergency services for the work they do day in, day out."*