



Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Ladies leading: specialised VICSES unit supports emergency crews in Corryong

A trio of VICSES volunteers from the Seymour Unit have taken on a very special role in Victoria's North-East, helping those who have lost homes, structures, and priceless items.

Seymour Unit Controller Christine Welsh, Deputy Controller Lisa James and member Morgan Duell have been on rotation between January 9th and 12th, 2020 as part of a specialised road rescue crew, helping community members and relieving existing VICSES volunteers in the Corryong area.

The trio have been collating donated goods, putting together small hampers for families unable to return home, including items like blankets, non-perishable food packs and toiletries.

It has been a difficult time for Corryong, with the usually lush, rolling landscape blackened and heavy with smoke in recent weeks.

A number of VICSES volunteers and other emergency services members in the region have been directly affected, with many areas isolated and in need of extra assistance. Christine, Lisa and Morgan have helped to take the pressure off by providing road rescue capability across the district and in the down time putting in many hours at the local relief centre.

Ms Welsh and Ms James also teamed up on an earlier deployment between January 2nd and 6th in Victoria's North-East.

During their time in Corryong, the all-female crew were not paged to any rescue operations, and finished up their four-day rotation on Sunday, January 12th. They are now on a well-deserved break with Controller Christine Welsh keen to speak with media about their experiences.

Quotes attributable to VICSES Seymour Unit Controller Christine Welsh:

"We offered help to anyone who needed it, local residents, farmers, shop owners, pretty much everyone who stopped by."

"It's really hard to wrap your head around how it really feels for residents in the North-East until you're there, there was a lady in a bakery crying who had just lost everything."

"On top of volunteering efforts, we were there to provide a bit of a morale boost – the girls and I made sure people had whatever they needed, whether that was food, shelter, or a listening ear."

Christine is available to speak to media between 8am and 8pm until Thursday, January 16th, 2020.

For more information, contact:

VICSES State Media Duty Officer
Phone: 1300 783 933
Email: media@ses.vic.gov.au



Links to higher resolution images:

<https://bit.ly/2QPkQUh>

<https://bit.ly/2TkrtQg>