



Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Geelong VICSES member reflects on acts of kindness

It is the small things in life that make a difference – that’s what Marion Petersen from the VICSES Geelong Unit found out recently in East Gippsland.

Marion was in uniform and coming home from deployment as part of a Staging Area Support Taskforce in Orbost - alongside Nathan Street and Trevor Clutterbuck from the South Barwon Unit.

The crew had been ferrying supplies to the Orbost relief centre, transporting people to Cann River, and assisting convoys and emergency distribution, and decided to stop for brekky in Warragul on their journey back to the South-West.

The trio ordered a hardy meal at ‘Frankies’ when a customer noticed their orange uniforms.

As they ate together, the stranger decided to undertake a small, but significant act of kindness and pay for their food and drinks.

The gesture nearly brought Marion to tears, and has been one of many seen by volunteers from the South-West during Victoria’s bushfire crisis. In one instance, a Gippsland local also offered to shout the crew coffee or an icy pole when they were filling up with petrol.

Alongside her praises for the public, Marion has also shared her gratitude for fellow volunteers at the Orbost Unit, including Allan Smeaton. Allan’s professionalism and dedication in the face of difficult conditions has helped the remaining locals in the area stay calm.

VICSES continues to support emergency services in fire-affected communities in far East Gippsland and the state’s north-east, with volunteers from all over the state putting up their hands for multiple deployment.

Locals in the South-West Region are encouraged to thank their local VICSES members alongside those from the CFA, Forest Fire Management, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and more.

Quotes attributable to Marion Petersen, VICSES volunteer from the Geelong Unit:

“I was a bit gobsmacked when our food was paid for in Warragul - it nearly brought me to tears that people would demonstrate such kindness.”

“It was the same thing when we stopped for fuel and passers-by would say nice things and ask if they could shout us a coffee or an icy pole. It was really heart-warming.”

Marion is available to speak to media about her experience as a VICSES volunteer in East Gippsland.

For more information, contact:

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