



Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Quiet achievers: North-West VICSES helping in Victoria's fire crisis

Victoria's unprecedented fire crisis is bringing out the best in our emergency services, including a huge effort from VIC SES Units supporting the fire agencies around the state.

As we see a brief reprieve from hot, windy conditions, stories are emerging of endurance, sacrifice and true, community spirit from volunteers - who are still travelling far and wide to assist in far East Gippsland and the state's north-east.

According to North West VICSES Operations Manager David Goldfinch, 27 volunteers in the region have put their day jobs on hold and deployed to Tallangatta, Mallacoota, and surrounds, clearing road ways of debris, helping locals to safely evacuate and to set up and manage base-camps.

The 27 North-West Vic SES volunteers recently deployed are from the following units:

- Eight members from the **Gisborne** Unit, plus two vehicles
- Four members from the **HQ Support** Unit (Bendigo), plus two vehicles
- Three members each from the **Bendigo** and **Dunolly** Units, plus two vehicles
- Two members each from **Rochester**, **Kerang**, **Swan Hill** and **Castlemaine** Units, plus four vehicles
- One member from the **Rushworth** Unit

Neville Spears is a volunteer from the Gisborne Unit, and supported CFA, DELWP and Forest Fire Management Vic crews in Swan Reach. Neville's deployment took place from January 1st to 6th, and saw him prepare over 700 meals a day at a specialised 'base camp', actively supporting those on the fire front.

The dedicated volunteer also helped to refuel critical generators and maintain a 350-strong tent city on a local footy oval.

VIC SES has played a huge role in the state's fire crisis, acting as a key support service during a challenging time for our nation. Residents around the North-West are encouraged to thank their local VICSES volunteers alongside emergency services for their dedication across various operations.

Quotes attributable to Mr Neville Spears, Gisborne VIC SES volunteer

"People at Swan Reach were amazed we had come all the way from Gisborne just to help them, we felt so appreciated."

"The positive to remember out of this fire crisis is that there's a vast group of people, including volunteers, out to provide as much assistance as they could, people that would drop everything to do anything to help."

Neville is available to speak to the media about his experience a VIC SES volunteer in East Gippsland.

For more information, contact:

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