



Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Shane Peach – VICSES volunteer, tower of strength

A one-man VICSES unit - that is what East Gippsland's Shane Peach was.

The 52 year-old has recently been through a true baptism of fire, managing to run an informal community meeting point to provide relief in the small town of Omeo, with just two years of volunteering under his belt.

Shane was the single Tambo Valley VICSES Unit member active and available when the East Gippsland fire threatened his home town of Omeo. With his own home at risk during the incident, other members had either followed advice to evacuate the area, were actively defending their own homes or were working as crew members with Forest Fire Management Victoria.

Before Shane was even able to tackle this mammoth task, he made sure his four step children were evacuated in military choppers from the region and partner was safe.

Shane has a mini-break following a harrowing few weeks, and wants to share the story of how he and four VICSES volunteers that he barely knew who joined him from Units across the state, managed to keep a tight-knit community safe, calm, and fed in the face of great adversity and challenge.

Shane was deployed at the Omeo recreation reserve, which acted as a relief and evacuation centre in recent weeks. VICSES informally ran the site, supplying power, food and water to displaced locals.

The small crew also made sure to maintain the critical generators and keep morale steady in the frightened town.

The five volunteers from Sorrento, Phillip Island, Moe and Sunbury Units, also supported the Forest Fire Management Victoria and Victoria Police during the process. The skies were dark and smoky, people were anxious, and emergency services were working through the night until cool weather finally gave everyone a reprieve.

Shane's leadership, selflessness and focus has since earned him praise by colleagues and fellow VICSES volunteers, and thankfully, his own house remains standing.

Quotes attributable to Tambo Valley VICSES member Shane Peach.

"I am a proud man that has been brought up to serve my community; I don't do it for the accolades."

"I've held my head high and kept VICSES operating with an important presence in this community - the vehicles are seen everywhere. Since I've come on board I've tried to get us more seen."

"I can't thank my Duty Officers and the support from the VICSES enough; I think we've made a hell of a difference."

Shane is available to speak to media about his experience leading a community relief and evacuation centre in Omeo, East Gippsland.

For more information, contact:

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