



# Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

18 September 2018

## VICSES Kinglake Unit's new Auslan initiative

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) Kinglake Unit has become one of the first units to take part in Auslan language classes, with the main aim of ensuring their volunteers are best equipped when helping their community, no matter the communication barrier.

The delivery of these Auslan courses, funded and driven by the VICSES Kinglake Unit, originates from an incident in which the unit was called out to assist a member of the community who was deaf.

Since then four of its members are now officially trained to level 2 (advanced) in Auslan language.

The VICSES Kinglake Unit is made up of 27 members and responds to around 180 call outs a year, ranging from road crash rescues to storm and flood related emergencies.

The Unit is taking progressive steps to be prepared in better assisting people from the deaf and hearing impaired community when they require VICSES help.

Each class is taught by qualified Auslan teacher & interpreter Ms Jacqueline Francicshelli, and runs for two hours a week, with weekly homework set.

Since this initiative first started, it has received positive reactions from community members both hearing, deaf and hearing impaired.

The Unit hopes to continue its Auslan training to not only better serve the community, but to also enhance their volunteer's professional development for many years to come.

### Quotes attributable to Leanne Klammer, VICSES Kinglake Unit Controller

*"This is a great initiative by the VICSES Kinglake Unit and only further shows the strong commitment our volunteers have in serving their community".*

*"It is so vital that people who are deaf, or hard of hearing, have accessible information and alerts for all emergencies. It's why this kind of progressive learning is so fantastic; it better enables us to interact with all walks of our community."*

*"VICSES and other emergency service organisations are putting huge efforts into working with and being able to better serves people from CALD communities, however we saw a gap and wanted to work on addressing it, so we could better serve individuals from the Deaf and hearing impaired community".*

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