



# Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

Thursday 17 October 2019

## A volunteer family in support of each other – Your Family, Our Family

This week the Victoria State Emergency (VICSES) kicked off the Your Family, Our Family campaign - celebrating the faces behind our incredible volunteers, all of whom support our members' rain, hail or shine, to ensure they are able to support their community.

With over 5,000 volunteers within VICSES, we are celebrating approximately 13,000 family members and friends, each of which who support VICSES every day.

Crystal Sanders has been a VICSES volunteer for over 13 years. As Unit Controller of the VICSES Horsham Unit, she not only supports the community during emergency incidents, but also trains and leads fellow volunteers at the unit.

In this leadership role Crystal supports her community to the best of her ability, which at times, can take its toll as she is also a mum to two young children, aged four and two.

She credits getting through this, to her partner Ben, who is a fellow volunteer with the local Country Fire Authority (CFA) Brigade. With exposure to volunteering, her partner understands the role well.

Through all of her commitments at the unit and then at home, Crystal makes it work. Juggling the two is more achievable because she knows that dinner will be cooked, the kids looked after and a warm hug will be waiting.

Without the support of her partner and young children, volunteering in this leadership position with VICSES, would be difficult.

At the sound of the pager calling for Crystal to assist her community or support her fellow volunteers after a traumatic incident, Ben will pick up where she has left off; this can be from dropping the kids to school, having a meal ready and cooked, to looking after the kids alone for long periods of time.

Volunteering and emergency work is a part of both Crystal and Ben's life, with the kids joining them at unit and brigade visits when possible.

Volunteer organisations often focus attention on the sacrifices their members make to serve their community, but the spotlight is rarely shined on those who support each volunteer, allowing them to respond to an emergency 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Your Family, Our Family highlights the sacrifices family members and friends make on a daily basis, so that the Victorian community can feel a little safer knowing that VICSES volunteers will be there for any emergency.

### For more information, contact:

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### **Quotes attributable to Crystal Sanders - Unit Controller, VICSES Horsham**

*"Being a VICSES volunteer has been so rewarding, I have a great team at the unit, and together we make a real difference to our community. I'm very lucky that I have the support of Ben, and my kids, I don't think I would be able to continue in this role if I didn't."*

*"Particularly after a tough incident involving trauma, just going home to my family and knowing I have their unspoken support and love, it makes it all worthwhile and a little easier".*

### **Quotes attributable to Ben – Crystal's partner**

*"We're very proud of Crystal. I know particularly how demanding the role can be but to see all the great work she is doing and the support he is providing to her community and fellow volunteers, is truly commendable. Even if it's hard sometimes when she has to run off, it makes it all worthwhile and us very proud to see her selflessly helping those in need."*

*"It's rewarding in itself to be able to give Crystal the support she needs to continue in this leadership role as a volunteer. I know that my support for her in turn supports the community. I guess we're all doing our bit to help each other".*

### **Quotes attributable to Tim Wiebusch - VICSES Chief Officer, Operations**

*"Your family, Our Family campaign is so important; we often have opportunities to thank our fantastic volunteers for all they do. This week is about the acknowledging the tremendous support and often sacrifices their family and friends make to ensure their loved one can serve the community."*

*"Family and friends play a huge part in SES volunteers being able to do what they do and I really want to thank each and every friend and family member who support our volunteers."*