

VicSESVA statement

'Firefighters take action on SES volunteers' (The Age, 29 July 2021)

The Victoria SES Volunteers Association (VicSESVA) advocates for the interests of VICSES volunteers across the State.

Recent media reports refer to a survey conducted by the UFU and raise questions about the professionalism and experience of SES volunteers.

VicSESVA supports all emergency responders in working together to provide safe and effective responses to disasters and emergencies. We question whether allegations raised by the UFU reflect the general standard of service given daily by SES volunteers, at no cost, to their local communities.

VicSESVA welcomes discussions around emergency management arrangements in Victoria. The results of the VEOHRC report into culture within the fire services would also be a valuable part of this conversation. We can all contribute to improving what is already a professional and skilled emergency response cohort, and open discussions that are not suppressed can assist.

Victorians know and appreciate the work of emergency volunteers, whether responding to unprecedented storm events in recent months, or prolonged events like the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020.

SES volunteers come from their local community; they are invested in giving back, helping others for no reward and making a difference. Their contribution is substantial and commendable.

VicSESVA Board of Directors 29 July 2021

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