

New service invites volunteers to register

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As fires continue to burn across the state, Volunteering Tasmania (VT) has launched a new volunteer management service for local communities.

Emergency Volunteering CREW (Community Response to Extreme Weather) recognises the community goodwill that follows a disaster, and provides a coordinated system to match volunteers' skills, availability and location with the needs of organisations supporting recovery efforts.

"Volunteers are vital during and in the aftermath of emergencies" said VT CEO Adrienne Picone.

"During disasters, only trained volunteers and emergency service workers will be able to assist in the disaster zone. However, when it's safe, the situation is assessed and additional volunteers may be required to support recovery efforts."

"The expertise of qualified tradespeople may be directed to help a local community re-build. Volunteers may be needed to sort donated goods, or to remove damaged fence lines. In the longer term, volunteers may be needed for garden restoration projects, re-vegetation initiatives and environmental weed control" Ms Picone said.

Volunteers will be contacted by Volunteering Tasmania if and when their specific skills are needed, which may be several days or even weeks after an emergency occurs.

The public is invited to register through the online system at <http://emergencyvolunteering.force.com/Register>

The implementation of EV CREW in Tasmania follows Queensland and the ACT. Victoria is currently rolling out a pilot program in the greater Geelong region.

Emergency Volunteering CREW has been funded through the National Disaster Resilience Grant Program, Emergency Volunteering Fund. For more information see <http://www.emergencyvolunteering.com.au/tas>

Those wanting to volunteer with emergency service organisations, like Tasmania Fire Service (TFS), State Emergency Services (SES) and St John Ambulance, should contact these organisations direct well before disasters occur as specialised training is required, see <http://www.emergencyvolunteers.tas.gov.au/>

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