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MEDIA RELEASE

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE PROGRAM A WINNER – CFA VOLUNTEERS

The CFA volunteers' association, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), has welcomed the State Government's decision to extend Emergency Medical Response (EMR) to more CFA fire stations.

With EMR, CFA crews trained in advanced first aid and equipped with oxygen and defibrillators are despatched to urgent ambulance calls, arriving and starting resuscitation of the patient minutes earlier, significantly increasing the patient's chances of survival.

VFBV Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ford says five volunteer Brigades have been providing EMR response since 2008 under the pilot program, with five Integrated Brigades joining them in late 2011.

"CFA volunteer and paid firefighters at ten brigades across the suburbs of Melbourne and provincial centres have achieved great success with Emergency Medical Response, saving a number of lives," Mr Ford said.

"The official study that shows EMR can significantly increase the patients' survival rate matches the volunteer Brigades' experience, and expansion of the program can only be a good thing, especially in country areas, where ambulance response times can be quite high," he said.

"The State Government's announcement of \$5 million to extend the program is a good start; the cost of EMR equipment and training for a volunteer Brigade is quite modest, especially for the considerable benefits it can produce."

The volunteer Brigades achieving success with EMR since 2008 are; Berwick, Edithvale, Mornington, South Morang and Whittlesea. Dozens of volunteers contributed and responded to the evaluation study, indicating they were extremely happy in performing the EMR role, and reporting the extra skills to be useful at other fire related call types, such as car accidents and rescue events.

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