

Transcript: Australian Government thank you to emergency management volunteers and their employers.

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As the Federal Attorney-General for Australia, one of my areas of responsibility is emergency management.

A vital resource of this sector is the emergency management volunteer movement, consisting of as many as 500,000 volunteers.

Australia has a long and proud tradition of volunteering.

The Australian Government acknowledges volunteers as the backbone of the emergency management sector throughout Australia.

Their capability and commitment enhances Australia's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Emergency management volunteers not only encompass those volunteers who work in the response sector.

Many volunteers are active within their local communities delivering prevention, preparedness and recovery programs, cadet schemes and community education programs.

Volunteers are also involved in events support and administrative roles, as well as nationally accredited emergency training.

These volunteers are members of a vast array of volunteer organisations which are the lead agencies for major natural disasters, including storms, floods, bushfires, and other natural disasters.

Volunteers are also the major providers of road rescue, and land and marine search and rescue in Australia. Across the country volunteers patrol beaches on weekends and holidays, and provide 24/7 call-out responses to beach and marine emergencies.

In some parts of the country volunteer organisations even provide the ambulance service.

Other volunteer organisations focus on caring for the welfare of people affected by disasters and assisting communities in the recovery process.

This highlights that we not only rely on volunteers during times of emergencies and disasters, but also in everyday situations.

Supporting these volunteers are thousands of employers whose commitment largely goes unnoticed.

Their generosity allows volunteers to take time off work, often at short notice and sometimes for extended periods of time.

This is an incredible commitment by volunteers and their employers.

The Australian Government acknowledges the significant contribution of self-employed volunteers, many of whom sacrifice earning capacity and resources to support the Australian community.

On behalf of the Australian Government I encourage other Governments, emergency management agencies and organisations, the community and even volunteers, to take time to honour Australians committed to enhancing and supporting Australia's capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

If you're an emergency management volunteer, an employer of a volunteer or a self-employed volunteer, on behalf of the Australian Government I would like to take this opportunity to extend formal gratitude and thanks for your vital contribution.