

Guidance for Australian Fire Service Medal and Emergency Service Medal nominations

Comparison Table: AFSM and ESM		
Criteria	Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM)	Emergency Service Medal (ESM)
Type of Award	Meritorious Service Award	Meritorious Service Award
Dates of Awards	Australia Day (January 26) and the Queen's Birthday (June) of each year.	Australia Day (January 26) and the Queen's Birthday (June) of each year.
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be awarded to a person who has given distinguished service as a member of a fire service agency. • Members of fire service agencies across Australia (in Victoria, as defined in the <i>State Emergency Management Plan</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Country Fire Authority (CFA) ○ Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) ○ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be awarded to a person who has given distinguished service as a member of an emergency service, including in emergency management, training or education. • Members of state emergency services and voluntary emergency organisations (In Victoria, as defined in the <i>State Emergency Management Plan</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) ○ Life Saving Victoria (LSV) ○ Marine Search and Rescue ○ Other eligible emergency service organisations as defined in the <i>State Emergency Management Plan</i> • The Medal may be awarded regardless of whether the person is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a member of an emergency service; or (b) a member of the Defence Force; or (c) a remunerated officer of the Commonwealth
Regulations	AFSM Regulations	ESM Regulations

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1. Nomination Statement instructions: AFSM & ESM Nominations

- Please ensure you have consulted these guidelines before submitting your nomination.

2. Instructions: Criteria

2.1 General

- The Nomination Statement must explain how the nominee has demonstrated service beyond the norm for each criteria.
- You are encouraged to provide as much detail in your responses as possible.
- Please ensure that the examples used in addressing the criteria does not refer to service that has previously been recognised.
- Nominations that are reflective of diverse agency membership are encouraged.

2.2 Criteria 1 (pg. 4)

- Criteria 1 must be completed for all nominations.
- “Distinguished Service”: Refers to service above and beyond the expectations of normal or ordinary duties. It suggests service that has generated outcomes and recognisable benefits to a fire service/s (AFSM), emergency service/s (ESM) or the community.
- “Prolonged Service”: is not specifically defined. The nominee’s service record may show a significant number of years of dedicated service that would help to distinguish their service from that of other members.

2.3 Criteria 2 - 5 (pg. 5 - 6)

- At least one of these criteria must be completed.
- You may provide responses to several of these criteria.

- Please use examples that have not been used in response to other criteria.

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Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM)



The award is a circular copper nickel medal. It is ensigned with the Crown of St Edward.



The back of the medal is inscribed with the words 'Australian Fire Service Medal' and 'For Distinguished Service'.

1. Background

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) recognises distinguished service by members of fire services agencies across Australia. In Victoria, this means a member of the following fire service agencies, as defined in the State Emergency Management Plan:

- Country Fire Authority
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Only one award is presented to an individual, and recipients are entitled to use the post-nominal letters 'AFSM'. Medals are awarded biannually in the Australia Day and the Queen's Birthday Honours Lists.

2. History and Significance

In 1988, a distinctly Australian award, the AFSM, was created. The AFSM recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services. It is awarded to both paid and volunteer members. This award acknowledges distinguished service by members of:

- a state or territory fire service
- a fire service of an agency of the Commonwealth

- the fire services of the external territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Island and Norfolk Island

The AFSM was established on 12 April 1988 by Letters Patent.

Prior to 1988, distinguished service was recognised by two awards:

- Queen's Fire Service Medal for Gallantry (awarded posthumously)
- Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service

3. How it is awarded

The AFSM is awarded by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the responsible Commonwealth, state and territory ministers. In Victoria, this is the Minister for Emergency Services, acting on behalf of the Premier of Victoria. The AFSM may be awarded to full-time or part-time members, volunteer members or auxiliary members of the fire services agencies.

4. Quota for the AFSM

For any state, the maximum number of medals awarded in a calendar year is determined on a quota basis, calculated on the number of combined membership of the fire services as at 30 June in the previous calendar year (e.g. for 2021 honours, membership as at 30 June 2020).

For Victoria, the AFSM is limited to:

- One award for each 1,000 (or part of 1,000) for full-time permanent members of the fire service or combined fire services per calendar year.
- One award for each 5,000 (or part of 5,000) for part-time, volunteer or auxiliary members of the fire service or combined fire services per calendar year.
- One additional award, which will be awarded at the discretion of the Minister.

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There is no obligation to award the entire quota each year.

5. Eligibility

May be awarded to a person who has given distinguished service as a member of a fire service agency.

Members of fire service agencies across Australia (in Victoria, as defined in the *State Emergency Management Plan*):

- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

6. How nominations are considered

Individual fire services or emergency service agencies are responsible for determining whether a nomination is suitable, and each nomination requires endorsement by the Chief Executive Officer, Chair or President of the agency.

It is important that each organisation considers its commitment to diversity and inclusion when determining whether a nomination is suitable. Nominations reflective of diverse agency membership are encouraged.

When the number of nominations exceeds quotas, agencies will be required to determine which nominations will be put forward and resubmit the excess nomination/s the following year.

The AFSM reference group oversees proceedings, and is comprised of representatives from fire services agencies, one volunteer representative and representatives from Emergency Management Victoria's Policy and Performance directorate.

The Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner will chair the reference group panel to champion diversity and inclusion and determine eligibility.

It should not be assumed that the reference group has detailed knowledge of the area in which the nominee has worked, or a full understanding of the significance of certain achievements. Therefore, it is important that the nomination demonstrates the significance of achievements by the nominee.

Prior to the reference group meeting, Policy and Performance directorate will undertake a quality review process to validate that the criteria have been met and ensure consistency, clarity and correctness (e.g. explaining acronyms).

If Policy and Performance directorate requires further information and clarification in the quality review process, the nomination will be returned to the agency with comments prior to the reference group meeting.

Nominations can be received in respect of retired members, only where the retirement occurs within 12 months of the approval of the nomination by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Medals can be awarded in respect of deceased members, if approval of the nominations by the Minister has occurred prior to the nominee's death.

7. Nomination form

The nomination form must include details of the person making the nomination and be signed and dated by the Chief Executive Officer, Chair or President of the organisation.

It is important to provide full personal details of the nominee, including the home address (which has been confirmed as current), qualifications and service history. All information is treated as confidential.

Signed, written references in support of the nomination must be provided by at least two individuals who are able to comment on the nominee's service and eligibility.

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Emergency Service Medal (ESM)



The central motif of the Emergency Services Medal is a raised equilateral triangle with bevelled edges. This is bordered by stylised sprays of wattle.

The centre of the triangle features a raised impression of the Federation Star that is surrounded by 24 balls. The balls represent the 24 hours per day the Emergency Service is

available to the community.

The back of the medal features a raised impression of the Federation Star, surrounded with the inscribed words: 'For Distinguished Service'.



1. Background

The Emergency Services Medal (ESM) recognises distinguished service by members of emergency service organisations across Australia, and people who are involved in emergency management, training or education. State emergency services and voluntary emergency organisations are eligible for the award. In Victoria, this means a member of the following emergency service organisations, as defined in the *State Emergency Management Plan*:

- Victoria State Emergency Service
- Life Saving Victoria
- Marine Search and Rescue
- Other eligible emergency service organisations as defined in the *State Emergency Management Plan*.

Only one award is presented to an individual, and recipients are entitled to use the post-nominal letters 'ESM'. Medals are awarded biannually in the Australia Day and the Queen's Birthday Honours Lists.

2. History and Significance

Along with the Ambulance Service Medal, the ESM was approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and introduced into the Australian system of honours in 1999. Announcing the awards, the then Prime Minister the Hon. John Howard said, "*The status of the awards will be reflected in their placement in the order of precedence of Australian honours and awards together with other civilian awards recognising distinguished and meritorious service.*" The ESM was established on 7 July 1999 by Letters Patent.

3. How it is awarded

The ESM is awarded by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the responsible Commonwealth, state and territory ministers. In Victoria, this is the Minister for Emergency Services, acting on behalf of the Premier of Victoria. The ESM may be awarded to full-time or part-time members, volunteer members or auxiliary members of the emergency service organisations.

4. Quota for the ESM

For any state, the maximum number of medals awarded in a calendar year is determined on a quota basis, calculated on the number of combined membership of the emergency services as at 30 June in the previous calendar year (e.g. for 2021 honours, membership as at 30 June 2020).

For Victoria, the ESM is limited to:

- One award for each 1,000, or part of 1,000, full-time permanent members of the emergency service, or combined emergency

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services serving on 30 June in the year immediately preceding that calendar year.

- One award for each 5,000, or part of 5,000, part-time members, volunteers or auxiliary members of the emergency service, or combined emergency services, serving on 30 June in the year immediately preceding that calendar year.
- One additional award to a full-time permanent member, part-time member, volunteer or auxiliary member.

There is no obligation to award the entire quota each year.

5. Eligibility

May be awarded to a person who has given distinguished service as a member of an emergency service, including in emergency management, training or education.

Members of state emergency services and voluntary emergency organisations (In Victoria, as defined in the *State Emergency Management Plan*):

- Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)
- Life Saving Victoria (LSV)
- Marine Search and Rescue
- Other eligible emergency service organisations as defined in the *State Emergency Management Plan*.

The Medal may be awarded regardless of whether the person is: (a) a member of an emergency service; or (b) a member of the Defence Force; or (c) a remunerated officer of the Commonwealth.

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Individual fire services or emergency service organisation are responsible for determining whether a nomination is suitable, and each nomination

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When the number of nominations exceeds quotas, agencies will be required to determine which nominations will be put forward and resubmit the excess nomination/s the following year.

The ESM Reference Group oversees proceedings and is comprised of representatives from the emergency service organisations that submit nominations, one volunteer representative, and representatives from Emergency Management Victoria's Policy and Performance directorate.

The Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner will chair the reference group panel to champion diversity and inclusion and determine eligibility.

It should not be assumed that the reference group has a detailed knowledge of the area in which the nominee has worked, or a full understanding of the significance of certain achievements. Therefore, it is important that the nomination demonstrates the significance of achievements by the nominee.

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