

## ***Nomination Instructions***

# ***Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and Emergency Services Medal (ESM)***

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*Please ensure you have consulted these guidelines before submitting your nomination/s.*

### Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM)



Front

*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'.*



Back

#### Background

The 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.

#### History and Significance

The AFSM was established on 12 April 1988 by Letters Patent. Distinctly an Australian award, 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

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

#### 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.

### Emergency Services Medal (ESM)



Front

*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'.*



Back

### Background

The 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## Meritorious Awards Guidance

### Instructions

#### 1. Criteria

##### 1.1 Eligibility

- *Members should meet the following:*
  - *Be serving /sworn members within the associated state emergency services and voluntary emergency organisations as defined in the State Emergency Management Plan.*
  - *Be in occupations that primarily provide services to the community, particularly in times of emergency or disaster (policy advice has been that these occupations are inherently more hazardous than most others and these awards were established for this reason). I.e. 'frontline', 'boots on ground'.*
  - *Have recent frontline service – within the last two years and be no more than 12 months since retirement.*
  - *Be currently involved in frontline service with exposure to hazard, or*
  - *Be eligible members who formerly worked (within the last two years) on the frontline with prolonged exposure to hazard in the service of the community, and who are now using their frontline experience to provide training or education in support others on the frontline.*
- *Management or administrative personnel who have not had exposure to hazards during their career are not eligible. Other forms of recognition, including the Public Service Medal (PSM) or the Order of Australia Awards may be more appropriate.*
- *Further information on the medals can be viewed on the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia website; for AFSM – click [here](#) and ESM - click [here](#)*

##### 1.2 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.*
- *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.*

##### 1.3 Criteria 1 (pg. 4 of nomination form)

- *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.

##### 1.4 Criteria 2 - 5 (pg. 5 – 6 of nomination form)

- *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.*

## Meritorious Awards Guidance

### 2. Nominations

#### *2.1 How they 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 and ESM reference group oversees proceedings, and is comprised of representatives from fire services agencies, emergency service organisations, one volunteer representative and representatives from Emergency Management Victoria.

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, Emergency Management Victoria 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 Emergency Management Victoria requires further information or clarification in the quality review process, the nomination will be returned to the agency with comments prior to the reference group meeting.

The reference group will endorse the nominations to be recommended to the Minister. The Minister will then, on behalf of the Premier, endorse the Victorian nominations which will be provided to the Governor-General for consideration.

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 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.

#### *2.2 Nomination forms*

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.

## Meritorious Awards Guidance

### 2.3 Diversity and Inclusion

Reflecting on national honour and award nominations, the Minister for Emergency Services continues to be an advocate for the commitment and the importance of increasing diversity and inclusion for women and members of diverse communities in Victoria’s emergency services. Emergency service organisations, with their strong ties to the community, have a unique opportunity to be the leaders in building a more diverse and inclusive Victoria.

Organisations are strongly encouraged to consider the framework and diversity when making nominations for the AFSM and ESM, taking into consideration nominees that are a true representation of the community we serve.

The Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework: Respect and Inclusion for All, provides information on what diversity and inclusion means, why it is important and what needs to be done.

The framework can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

### 3. Quotas

For any state, the maximum number of medals awarded in a calendar year is determined on a quota basis.

This is calculated based on the number of combined memberships of fire services (for the AFSM) and emergency services (for the ESM) as at 30 June in the previous calendar year (e.g. for 2022 honours, membership as at 30 June 2021).

AFSM is limited to	ESM 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 1,000, or part of 1,000, full-time permanent members of the emergency service, or combined emergency services serving on 30 June in the year immediately preceding that 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 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, which will be awarded at the discretion of the Minister.	One additional award to a full-time permanent member, part-time member, volunteer or auxiliary member.

**Note:** there is no obligation to award the entire quota each year, however if there is a surplus, it cannot be carried over to the following year.

### 4. COVID-19 Nominations – Meritorious Awards

The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat are continuing to work closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to review proposed amendments to the Regulations for the meritorious suite of awards. The proposed amendments aim to recognise individual's outstanding contribution to the nation's COVID-19 response and recovery.

The COVID-19 recognition will be able to be made outside of existing quotas for meritorious awards for a period of time (yet to be determined).

Individuals are able to be recognised for their contribution, service or achievement in response to the pandemic under the meritorious awards and are featured on a dedicated COVID-19 honours roll, which is published on the Governor-General's website and the official Australian Honours database.

#### What could COVID related service look like?

- *must meet current eligibility criteria for meritorious awards (distinguished, frontline service, exposure to hazard, current or recent operational role),*
- *must have provided outstanding service, achievement or contribution to Australia's response or recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic,*
- *undertaking normal duties in a COVID-19 restricted work environment will not be sufficient to warrant recognition for outstanding contribution in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Should you require any further information relating to the nomination process, please email [EMV.ExecServices@emv.vic.gov.au](mailto:EMV.ExecServices@emv.vic.gov.au).