

Foreword

By The Honourable Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister of Australia



This edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* coincides with National Volunteer Week, so it is timely to reflect on the important role that emergency services volunteers play in our community.

Volunteering is a great Australian tradition. About 6 million of us volunteer every year – on our beaches, along fire fronts and helping in our communities. I have

found participating in the Rural Fire Service and the surf lifesaving movement a very satisfying way to give back to our community.

We don't have to look very far to find examples of volunteers helping to make our country more resilient – the 'Mud Army' during the Queensland floods, the Rural Fire Service fighting from backyards in the Blue Mountains in 2013, or the St John Ambulance first responders who are always there for people in trouble.

It is important that volunteers have the skills they need to undertake their duties. The Government has signed a new *National Partnership Agreement for Natural Disaster Resilience* with states and territories to help provide better equipment, training and support.

I respect the professionalism of our volunteer emergency services organisations and those who volunteer to support them. Community groups like the Australian Red Cross, Salvation Army, BlazeAid, Guides and Scouts Australia, Rotary and Lions lend a hand and help make our communities stronger.

Australia has long been a nation of volunteers. Their work, each and every day, makes our country an even better place.

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Prime Minister of Australia

**NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER WEEK**

12 TO 18 MAY 2014



**25 YEARS OF NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
12-18 MAY 2014**