



## Media release

Andrew Katos MP

Member for South Barwon

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### **Coalition Government supports Surf Coast rescue volunteers to buy Victoria-first amphibious boat**

A new amphibious boat will play a key role in saving lives along the Surf Coast, Member for South Barwon Andrew Katos said today.

Representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services Kim Wells, Mr Katos today launched the Torquay Marine Rescue Service's new 6.1 metre Sealegs amphibious, rigid inflatable boat which is the first vessel of its kind to be used in Victoria.

"The Sealegs can help Torquay Marine Rescue volunteers reach areas along the Surf Coast and Great Ocean Road that are otherwise only accessible by helicopter or by a high-angle cliff rescue" Mr Katos said.

"It will make a real difference to the ability of Torquay Marine Rescue Service to keep people safe, particularly the thousands of visitors who flock to the region every year."

The \$140,000 Sealegs vessel was partly funded through the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP), which provides grants to volunteer emergency services organisations to purchase extra tools and equipment they need to keep the community safe.

"The Coalition Government has always placed a high priority on our volunteers who are the backbone of our emergency response and generously give their time responding to needs of others in emergencies," Mr Katos said.

"Torquay Marine Rescue Service received more than \$88,000 from VESEP which went a long way to meeting the \$140,000 cost of the vessel.

"Also, thanks to the generosity of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, RACV Torquay Resort and private benefactors, Torquay Marine Rescue Service now has a vessel that is among the first of its type to be used for rescue operations in Victoria.

"The Sealegs is also the first amphibious rescue vessel to be used in an ocean or surf environment in Australia."

The Sealegs will be named the 'Amanda Baeck' in recognition of the support provided to the Torquay Marine Rescue Service by the Baeck family over many years.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Kim Wells said the Coalition Government was committed to supporting our volunteer emergency services, providing a record \$12.23 million for the VESEP program in 2014-15, matching the record funding the government allocated last year.

“Since 2011, the Coalition Government has invested more than \$48 million in VESEP and assisted organisations such as CFA, SES and Life Saving Victoria to purchase extra equipment,” Mr Wells said.

“It also supports smaller organisations such as Torquay Marine Rescue Service.”

“VESEP is a clear demonstration of the commitment the Coalition Government has to emergency services volunteers,” Mr Katos said.

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