



Dominic Perrottet

Premier of NSW

Paul Toole

Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional NSW,
Minister for Police

Steph Cooke

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience

MEDIA RELEASE

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JOB PROTECTION FOR FLOOD EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS

Premier Dominic Perrottet has activated employment protections for volunteers to ensure they cannot be unjustly fired from their jobs while volunteering in the flood emergency.

The Premier said the provisions mean an emergency volunteer cannot be fired or have their position changed for a work absence that is related to their volunteer work.

“The volunteer response in this flood emergency has been nothing short of amazing – everyone who has put their own lives on hold to help others during these floods has been a true hero,” Mr Perrottet said.

“I think the heartfelt thanks and gratitude around the state for these volunteers would suggest that very few employers would take any negative action against their employees who are volunteering.

“I hope this employment provision can give some comfort and security to volunteers who now know that their regular jobs are safe.”

The employment protection order was made by the Premier under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* and will remain in force for at least the next 14 days.

The order means that employers found to have taken negative action against a volunteer can be fined and the court can direct employers to reinstate workers who have been dismissed.

Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional NSW and Minister for Police Paul Toole said volunteers were the backbone of regional communities, and this support was crucial to allow them to continue making a big difference on the ground at a time it’s needed most.

“Many of the volunteers across the North Coast have been directly hit by the floods themselves - with some even losing their own homes - but they continue to work around the clock to help communities get back on their feet,” Mr Toole said.

“This will safeguard their jobs and provide certainty that putting up their hands to help others now won’t impact their employment down the track. This is about helping them to help others.”

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience Steph Cooke said volunteers from a number of different emergency services agencies are continuing to support our community, and it is important we continue to support them.

“Please know we have your back. You have all done an incredible job, working long days to help our State through this crisis. As your Minister, I back you in all the way and our government does as well,” Ms Cooke said.

The order covers volunteer emergency workers from agencies such as the NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, Surf Life Saving NSW, NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc and Marine Rescue NSW.