



## **ASSISTANT TREASURER**

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**PRESS  
RELEASE**

### **CONSULTATION BEGINS ON THE EXTENSION OF TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION SUPPORT TO ALL VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES**

The Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, has today released for public comment draft legislation that extends tax deductible donation support to all 6,200 Australian volunteer fire brigades.

The Government's legislation also extends the access to this support to all volunteer-based, state-recognised emergency service entities.

"The draft legislation will allow all volunteer fire brigades and related volunteer emergency services to collect tax deductible donations, helping these bodies to continue performing their important role in our communities," the Assistant Treasurer said.

"The draft bill will extend deductible gift recipient (DGR) support to all these entities and they will have flexibility in how access this support."

"The brigades can choose to go through centralised public donation funds established by a State government agency - as is currently the case in Victoria - or they can set up their own funds."

Until now, only 1,800 volunteer brigades – less than a third – have had access to tax deductible donation support. These have been recognised as public benevolent institutions (PBIs) - not-for-profit institutions organised for the direct relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness. However, recent legal cases have led the Commissioner of Taxation to consider that volunteer fire brigades do not meet the strict PBI criteria.

"The Government's legislation will ensure these brigades can continue to collect tax deductible donations and goes much further by extending such support to all remaining brigades," the Assistant Treasurer said.

"The Government recognises the valuable community service provided by Australia's volunteer fire fighters and this measure will help them attract vital donations."

The draft legislation provides support in a way that is consistent across all jurisdictions and takes into account the views expressed by the States and Territories in giving brigades the freedom to decide how best to minimise their overall administrative burden.

The draft legislation is available at [www.treasury.gov.au](http://www.treasury.gov.au) and consultation closes on Tuesday 25 May 2010.

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