

# GIPPSLAND Times

& MAFFRA SPECTATOR



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HELP FOR FARMERS

## FODDER DROP

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21 YEARS IN DELI

## ERA ENDS

WEATHER



Tuesday Mostly sunny - Min: 5 Max: 17



Wednesday Mostly sunny - Min: 5 Max: 15



Thursday Mostly sunny - Min: 3 Max: 15

## Emergency First Response unit for Rosedale

# Faster emergency care

Freia Lily

THE newly-established Rosedale Emergency First Response unit will reduce delays in responding to emergencies.

The unit, which became operational last week, is sharing State Emergency Service facilities in Cansick St, and paramedic Sandra Tozer, who has overseen the initiative, said co-locating was a fantastic opportunity in "sharing common ground, and protecting the community".

Ms Tozer said the driving factor behind the initiative was delays experienced in responding to emergencies.

"All time is crucial, and we found our response times were not where we needed them to be," Ms Tozer said.

Rural emergency services all over the country can relate to the pressure of being under-staffed and stretched thin when covering distances that can be more than 50km.

Ambulance Victoria chief executive, Associate Professor Tony Walker, said first responders played an important role in supporting response in rural and regional Victoria by working alongside career paramedics to deliver treatment to patients.

"They work in areas that are sparsely populated where distances are further and it can take longer for an ambulance to reach an emergency case," he said.

"They are dispatched to cases at the same time as paramedics, providing early intervention and a timely response," Mr Walker said.

Before the Rosedale branch opened, responders based in Heyfield, Traralgon and Sale were expected to cover a great deal of the Wellington Shire, meaning they could travel half an hour or more to reach a patient in critical need.

Now with the 24-hour, seven-days a week operation, response times to people in Rosedale, Willung, Nambrok and Gormandale are significantly lower.

Not only is the public benefiting from more peace of mind, but the unit also brings a wealth of career opportunity to Rosedale and the surrounding areas.

Like the SES, Emergency First Response units



Paramedic Sandra Tozer, left, with first responders Del Jeffery, Belinda Knight and Craig Hooper have been busy helping set up the new Emergency First Response unit in Rosedale.

Photo: Freia Lily

are sustained by volunteers, and the Rosedale unit currently has a team of six working on a roster basis.

"But we are always looking for good characters to train," Ms Tozer said.

All training is subsidised by the government, and

volunteers come out of it with basic first aid and a Certificate II in Emergency Medical First Response.

Once training is complete, any time dedicated to the unit is on a volunteer basis for the betterment of the community, but if called out to a patient, the responders will be paid for their work.

"It's a great chance for someone who is interested in working in the medical field to get their foot in the door," Ms Tozer said.

Freia Lily is an RMIT final year journalism student on placement with the *Gippsland Times*.

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