

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



South Australian fire trucks heading to the front line in Tonga

Monday, 15 May 2017

Two South Australian fire trucks are about to start their journey to the front line of Tonga Fire and Emergency Services (TFES), thanks to the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS).

The two obsolete appliances from the MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) have been restored and will soon depart MFS headquarters in Adelaide for Melbourne, before they're shipped to the Pacific island nation of Tonga.

The donation has been made possible due to a long-term alliance between the MFS and TFES that began 14 years ago.

Background

MFS firefighters first visited the Kingdom of Tonga in 2003 and were concerned by the realities at the time.

Tongan firefighters would respond to emergencies without helmets, gloves, boots or breathing apparatus, while only four deteriorating firefighting jackets were available between 50 personnel.

In 2004, a supportive partnership was formed between the MFS and TFES with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The alliance has led to the exchange of personnel, information, educational materials, training and equipment over many years and TFES has become greatly respected within the community.

The two restored fire trucks to be donated are former MFS and CFS appliances that had reached the end of their service life in SA and are due to arrive in Tonga in June.

Quotes attributable to Emergency Services Minister Peter Malinauskas

I commend the Metropolitan Fire Service and Tonga Fire and Emergency Services for their long-term partnership. It's pleasing to see that their alliance remains strong, so many years after it first began.

Tongan firefighters now have a greatly improved situation in terms of personal protective equipment, replacement fire appliances, community education materials and training.

This latest donation of two restored fire appliances will further enhance emergency response and improve community safety.

Quotes attributable to SA Metropolitan Fire Service Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Glenn Benham

The fire appliances that are about to depart the MFS for Tonga are water tankers that will be gratefully received by the TFES. Shipping costs have been kindly covered by the Tongan government.

The trucks will provide Tongan firefighters with greater capacity to transport water to emergency incidents and attack fires rapidly on arrival, leading to a reduction in fire damage and economic loss.

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

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