

media release



CFS and MFS assist Victorian fire fight

Sunday, 8 February 2009

The Country Fire Service (CFS) Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) Acting Chief Officer, Mick Smith today extended their heartfelt sympathy to the Victorian community.

Fifty firefighters from South Australia's fire services will fly to Melbourne today to assist in battling devastating bushfires which continue to burn out of control in Victoria.

The team comprises 40 Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters and 10 Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighters who will spend five days helping the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in combating multiple bushfires.

The CFS has also dispatched the Erickson Aircrane known as 'Flynn' from the Adelaide hills, after a comprehensive assessment of the risks.

The Aircrane has been responded to assist the Victorians in dealing with the continuing imminent risk to life and property.

The CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson has advised that an additional helicopter and an additional fixed wing bomber have been engaged to supplement South Australia's fleet while the Aircrane is deployed interstate.

Arrangements have been made for the Aircrane to be returned to South Australia prior to the next day of extreme fire danger in this state.

Mr Ferguson says the situation in Victoria is absolutely horrendous and its enormity is difficult to fathom.

"Many Victorians are only just coming to terms with the true extent of the devastation, knowing full well there may be more to come.

"The CFS and MFS in South Australia have always had a firm and supportive relationship with the CFA in Victoria, and are glad to offer help in Victoria's hour of need," Mr Ferguson said.

MFS Acting Chief Officer, Mick Smith says Victoria's CFA has generously supported South Australian firefighters many times in the past, including in the Kangaroo Island Fires in 2007.

"Our firefighters will be working as an integrated South Australian team in supporting the Victorians throughout this terrible tragedy.

"This integrated approach with the CFA has worked very successfully in the past, particularly during bushfires in New South Wales in 1994 and 2000," Mr Smith says.

While our state is currently enjoying cooler conditions, the CFS and MFS warn that South Australia is expected to face dangerous fire weather again next weekend.

CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson says the overwhelming fire incidents in Victoria should serve as a warning to all.

"If South Australians don't have a Bushfire Action Plan, if they're still not sure whether to stay or go in a fire, then these decisions must be made **now**," Mr Ferguson says.

The MFS again reminds people living in towns and cities not to be complacent about the threat of bushfire.

For further information contact CFS Media Line (08) 8463 4206 or MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770.