

media release



SA continues support for Victorian fire fight

Friday, 13 February 2009

South Australian fire services will continue their support for the Victorian fire fight from tomorrow, with the deployment of a third contingent of Country Fire Service (CFS) and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighters to Victoria.

Fifty firefighters from South Australia's fire services will fly to Melbourne tomorrow to help the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) in Victorian fire fighting operations.

The team comprises 40 CFS firefighters and 10 MFS firefighters, along with three CFS field commanders and one MFS field commander.

This third deployment will replace the previous deployment of 50 firefighters who left for south Gippsland on Wednesday evening and return to South Australia on Sunday.

CFS Deputy State Coordinator Brenton Eden said neither fire service organisation had expressed a difficulty in sourcing crew, while at the same time ensuring that the State maintains its high level capacity to address current and anticipated threats.

"The South Australian community can remain assured that deploying a third contingent of firefighters will not put a strain on our State's emergency services resources," he said.

"We have 10,746 Country Fire Service volunteers across the State, so we have sufficient resources to call upon to respond to any fire threats."

The CFS also re-establishes its normal level of aviation resources with the return of the Erickson air crane to South Australia this afternoon.

Mr Eden said the overwhelming tragedy in Victoria should serve as a warning to all South Australians.

"The CFS urges the community to use the Victorian experiences to assist them to make up their minds in terms of the 'Stay or Go' policy and use the cooler weather to prepare their properties and work with their families on a Bushfire Action Plan," he said.

Residents who want more information for preparing a Bushfire Action Plan should refer to the CFS website www.cfs.sa.gov.au, speak to their CFS regional officers, or ring the CFS.

Metropolitan Fire Service Deputy Chief Officer Mick Smith reiterated the advice and said firefighters were doing all they could to help the efforts interstate.

"MFS firefighters are seeing the tragedy unfolding in Victoria and are wanting to help," he said.

"The 'Shake the Boot' campaign is one way they are helping, along with volunteering their services in Victoria.

Emergency Services Minister, Michael Wright, said emergency services members are doing a magnificent job by volunteering their services.

"Many of the officers will come face to face with the trauma that's currently gripping Victoria and we want them all to know that they've got our full support and we very much appreciate the extraordinary contribution they are making to the fire fighting effort."