

media release

Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation



SA firefighter provides a home to Kinglake

Tuesday, 24 March 2009

A South Australian firefighter will **today** begin a journey of hundreds of kilometres to provide a home for a Victorian firefighter and their family, left homeless by the recent bushfire tragedy.

Pat Hill is a Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighter based at Port Pirie in South Australia's mid north, and also volunteers with the SA Country Fire Service (CFS) at nearby Mintaro.

The father of seven has decided to donate his family's massive nine berth mobile home to a Victorian firefighter's family, and intends to drive it from Mintaro to Kinglake with his son Brett.

Pat Hill will **start his journey in Port Pirie on Tuesday, 24 March at 8.00 am**, travelling through the mid-north, picking up donated goods to load into the motor home at Mintaro.

He'll proceed to MFS Headquarters in **Adelaide** on Tuesday afternoon, where he will stay overnight before travelling through **Mount Gambier** and **arriving in Kinglake on Thursday, 26 March**.

Mr Hill, an Ash Wednesday veteran, says he was very moved by the scenes of grief, loss and destruction during Victoria's recent bushfires, and felt he needed to do something meaningful.

"I fought during Ash Wednesday and watched as an uncontrollable fire raged towards my own community. Mintaro was spared by a sudden wind change, but a friend lost his home.

"The Victorian tragedy brought back old feelings of helplessness, and I felt a strong urge to do something to help the affected communities interstate," Mr Hill says.

The MFS and CFS firefighter considered donating money, but felt that his family's large mobile home – once used for family holidays – would provide a Victorian firefighter's family with a roof over its head.

The mobile home has bedding for 10 people and can legally carry nine passengers on the road. It will be donated to the fire fighting community in Kinglake, with the Kinglake fire fighting community to decide which firefighter the home will go to.

Pat Hill's family has spent the last few weeks readying the mobile home and has been overwhelmed by the generosity of the Mintaro and surrounding communities, including hotels and other businesses.

Even the diesel fuel for the journey has been donated by Caltex service station at Clare.

Mr Hill has been flooded with donations of tools for rebuilding, books, regional wine and homely gifts to stock in the mobile home. Pat Hill and his son Brett will distribute these gifts to people in Kinglake.

He has received strong support from local schools and churches through his role as a Christian pastoral support worker with the Clare Valley Christian Outreach.

The journey entitled '**Pirie to Kinglake**' also has the backing of the Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation (APFF).

AN APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE FOR PAT HILL'S JOURNEY:

TUESDAY, 24 MARCH - Leaving Port Pirie MFS at 8.00 am to pick up donated goods and pick up the mobile home at Mintaro at 9.30 am. Stopping at: Clare and Adelaide.

WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH - Pat Hill will be available for interview at Adelaide MFS Headquarters at 9.00 am, leaving Adelaide at 10.00 am. Stopping in Mount Gambier at approximately 4.00 pm.

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH – Pat Hill leaves Mount Gambier early, arriving in Kinglake at approximately 1.00 pm.