

media release



Mission accomplished for SA firefighters

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

The last contingent of Country Fire Service (CFS) and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighters and staff, along with SA Ambulance Service paramedics will return home today, ending almost three weeks of continuous deployment to Victoria.

This contingent will arrive home today on two separate chartered flights at 5.40pm and 7.10pm.

Just under 800 firefighters and support staff from the CFS and MFS have provided much needed assistance to their Victorian counterparts as they struggled to contain a range of fires in the most ravaged parts of the state.

Improving weather conditions and rain in Victoria resulted in a planned deployment today being cancelled and firefighters returning to South Australia.

CFS Chief Officer Euan Ferguson has paid tribute to their commitment, selfless efforts and professionalism for assisting the Victorian bushfire effort – with some being deployed more than once.

“The CFS praises the firefighters who gave up their time to offer their services interstate and also those who stayed behind to ensure the safety of the South Australian community,” Mr Ferguson said.

“The deployment was highly successful as it took into account the needs of South Australia while assisting Victoria with their request for resources.

“At no point in time was South Australia’s bushfire readiness compromised due to the deployment interstate and overall, it was a successful operation.”

Strike teams from the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and Forestry SA are still committed to the Victorian bushfire effort.

The CFS also committed five fire fighting appliances and a command vehicle to the Victorian bushfires in addition to 19 Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) vehicles.

Forestry SA also sent fire fighting staff and support personnel to Victoria.

“Our thoughts are now with those many Victorians who have been left devastated by the loss of lives and the insurmountable task of rebuilding their communities,” Mr Ferguson said.

MFS Deputy Chief Officer, Mick Smith said he's proud of the many MFS and CFS firefighters who have volunteered their time to assist in Victoria.

“It's great to welcome home our firefighters, all of whom have been touched and moved by what they've experienced in recent weeks,” Mr Smith said.

“However, our thoughts remain with the many people who have lost families, loved ones, properties and livelihoods in Victoria.”