

Saturday, 10 October 2009

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Emergency Services Minister Michael Wright has encouraged all South Australians to reflect and honour those firefighters who have died while keeping South Australian communities safe, as part of 2009 National Firefighters' Remembrance Day.

“Our firefighters provide a valuable service to the South Australian community, they are on call every day and put their lives at risk to help others,” Minister Wright said.

“Sadly there is a risk that lives can be lost and today is an opportunity to reflect and remember those firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice.

“By honouring their memory we recognise the sacrifice these firefighters made.”

Chief Officer Grant Lupton says the MFS has a proud history dating back to the 1860s, when the organisation was first established.

“Since then, South Australians have been served by thousands of MFS firefighters who have strived to keep our community safe,” Mr Upton said.

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) has been fortunate to have not lost any firefighters in the line of duty since 1977. A total of seven firefighters have died on duty since 1886. Thirteen Country Fire Service (CFS) volunteer firefighters have been killed in the line of duty since 1979.

“National Firefighters' Remembrance Day is a chance to reflect on the sacrifices past and current firefighters have made – and continue to make – in the name of community safety,” Minister Wright said.

All MFS stations will fly their flags at half-mast from sunrise until midday in recognition of the day.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson says this year's Remembrance Day will be particularly moving for all Australians, given the tragedy of Victoria's bushfires earlier this year, where one firefighter died and many sustained serious injuries in the line of duty.

“Many firefighters lost their own homes, and in some cases, members of their own families lost their lives while they selflessly worked to protect the lives and property of others,” he said.

“On National Firefighters' Remembrance Day we honour the history of mateship and family, by remembering those who have been killed whilst fighting fires on active duty.”

Memorials in South Australia for the emergency services are located at the Centennial Park Gardens Pasadena, Cheltenham Cemetery and Elder Park, while the other major memorial for CFS members is located at the Mount Lofty Summit Visitors Centre.