

Tuesday, 11 November 2008

### **LOCAL NORTHERN PROJECT TAKES HOME NATIONAL AWARD**

A safety project created in Virginia, North of Adelaide, has been honoured at the National Safer Communities Awards ceremony in Canberra today.

The emergency risk project, developed by the Virginia based Department of Families and Communities, has been given a Highly Commended award at a prestigious annual awards ceremony at Parliament House.

Minister for Emergency Services, Michael Wright, said it was remarkable achievement.

“It is encouraging to see a locally based project, devised by dedicated South Australians, being recognised at such a high level and we can all be extremely proud of what they’ve managed to achieve.”

The Virginia ‘Safety in Emergencies’ project emerged following the floods in November 2005.

“As a result of thorough community collaboration between the Country Fire Service, State Emergency Service, the local Vietnamese Farmers’ Association and Red Cross, a program to increase hazard awareness was produced and has successfully enhanced the capacity of the Virginia community to respond in the event of future disasters.”

“It’s the ninth year these Awards have recognised projects, which develop strategies and tools to support community self-reliance. They have been held to recognise and encourage best practice in emergency management and community safety across Australia,” Minister Wright said.

The Australian Attorney-General Robert McClelland presented sixteen Australian Safer Communities Awards, promoted by Emergency Management Australia (EMA) with the assistance of SAFECOM in SA.

In congratulating the award winners, Mr McClelland said the winning projects had particular significance and appeal for their innovative ways of helping individuals and communities during challenging emergencies.

“When communities are resilient they are better able to deal with a crisis, better equipped to deal with the consequences, and bounce back even stronger,” he said.

Altogether 89 organisations from across Australia submitted entries for this year’s awards, first judged at State level with winners put forward for national judging. Categories for the awards included the three tiers of government; volunteer organisations; the private sector; education, training and research bodies; not-for-profit groups; and those of national significance.