

Tuesday, 16 September 2008

EMPLOYERS APPLAUDED FOR SUPPORT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

Emergency Services Minister Michael Wright will today join the Premier, Mike Rann in recognising employers who allow their staff to regularly down tools to volunteer for emergency service organisations.

Both will present awards and certificates at a special Volunteer and Employer breakfast ahead of Community Cabinet at the Salisbury Country Fire Service (CFS) Station at 7.30 am today.

Minister Wright said, “This year’s community cabinet presents a perfect opportunity to extend this Government’s enormous gratitude to these selfless members of our community who volunteer so much of their own time purely to help others. South Australia simply could not do without such a wonderful group of giving and willing individuals.”

Euan Ferguson, Chief Officer, CFS says, “Volunteers are unsung heroes and the backbone of our community. They give countless hours of their time each year without reward, for the sheer pleasure of helping others.

“Without the support of employers, emergency service volunteers wouldn’t be as readily able to fight bushfires or assist with other emergencies,” Mr Ferguson says.

In South Australia, there are 17,525 emergency service volunteers; 15,711 of them are members of the CFS and 1,814 are with the SES.

Stuart MacLeod, Chief Officer, SES says, “Emergency service volunteers in particular are required to drop everything at short notice in order to fight fire, rescue others or prevent flood.

“It takes a special kind of employer to allow a staff member to do this. Today’s breakfast is about applauding these employers for patiently understanding that the work of CFS and SES volunteers benefits everyone,” Mr Macleod says.

Self-employed volunteers will also be recognised at the breakfast.

Mr Wright says, “In the case of self-employed volunteers, whenever they’re called out to an emergency, these dedicated individuals are helping out two-fold. They put their entire businesses on hold to follow their passion of helping the community in trying times.”

At the breakfast the Premier, Mike Rann will present eight ‘Premiers Certificate(s) of Appreciation’ in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. The recipients are CFS and SES volunteers who have shown great dedication and commitment to volunteering with emergency services over many years.