

Wednesday, 7 October 2009

MAJOR EXERCISE TO TEST EMERGENCY SERVICES

South Australia's Police and Emergency Services will today put themselves to the test; dealing with a mock incident similar to what occurred during the Black Saturday fires in Victoria.

Police & Emergency Services Minister Michael Wright said the exercise, named Exercise Team Spirit 09, would provide the State's Emergency Services with valuable experience and help further develop understanding in such volatile situations.

"This is an ideal way for our emergency services to see how they respond to such a major incident," Minister Wright said.

"Conducting such an extensive joint exercise, which tests the State's capacity to deal with a major emergency incident, similar to what Victoria experienced, will assist our emergency service workers gain real-time chance to test their responses."

Under the scenario the fictitious date of the exercise is Monday 8 February 2010 with the prevailing weather similar to that experienced during Black Saturday.

Significant fires will be occurring in each of the six State CFS Regions to ensure we fully test all of our State systems.

Minister Wright, who will visit the State Emergency Centre this morning, said the full-day exercise would allow emergency services leaders to identify any areas of response and preparedness that may require some fine-tuning in the future.

"Emergency preparedness is something the State Government takes very seriously. This exercise is being conducted to ensure that South Australia has effective, coordinated systems ready to deal with any potential emergency situation," Minister Wright said.

"Conducting these exercises is extremely important. While we were fortunate last year to escape similar fires to what occurred in Victoria, we must remember that the 2009 bushfire season is only weeks away and we must be as best prepared as possible.

"Whilst the State Government and emergency services are doing everything possible to better prepare communities for the upcoming bushfire season, ultimately it is the responsibility of each individual living in a high-risk area needs to be prepared to take protective action should a bushfire strike."

"We all need to work together to ensure our state is as prepared as possible, and is as safe as possible so that lives can be protected this bushfire season."