



CFS – SA COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE AERIAL FIREFIGHTING DEMONSTRATION 21 DECEMBER 2010

The fire danger season is upon us and the Country Fire Service's (CFS) fleet of aerial firefighting aircraft are readying themselves for possible action. This year the fleet has been reconfigured slightly to include two new aircraft types to better meet the need of the CFS and South Australian fire fighting conditions.

A special demonstration event was planned to allow CFS personnel, the media and key members of the community who assist to facilitate aerial firefighting, to view the new aircraft and become reacquainted with the existing fleet of fixed and rotary wing aircraft including the Aircrane.

CFS personnel, SES & SACFS together with the Premier of South Australia, The Hon Mike Rann MP participated in the event which occurred at: **Forestry SA Mt Crawford Headquarters, Warren Road, Mt Crawford**

Programme

- 10.00 am – Welcome by Andrew Lawson – Acting CO CFS
- 10.15 am – Official launch – The Premier, Hon Mike Rann
- 10.30 am – Static Aircraft display and familiarization
- 11.15 am – Airborne display

Featured Aircraft:

- **S64E Aircrane** – N189AC (c/n 641001) '731' 'Gypsy Lady' op/by Erickson Air-Crane.
- **AS 355F Helicopter** (New to fleet) - VH-YUQ '501' op/by McDermott Helicopters.
- **Bell 205A Helicopter**
N232HL '534' (c/n 30157) op/by McDermott Helicopters
N238HL '535' (c/n 30161) op/by McDermott Helicopters
- **Air Tractor 802**
VH-ODW AT-802 '580' op/by Aerotech
VH-ODX AT-802A '583' op/by Aerotech
VH-ODZ AT-802A '582' op/by Aerotech
- **Cessna 208B** (New to fleet) - VH-ODU '500' op/by Aerotech
- **BK117B2 Mac Rescue Helicopter** - VH-VSA 'MAC' 'Rescue' 'SA Government' (This is an ADL based rescue aircraft op/by Australian Helicopters) can participate as a fire observation/control a/c.

The media choppers: VH-NDE Bell 206B 'TEN' media helicopters & VH-NDY Bell 206B '7' media helicopter both operated by Helistar took some excellent air-to-air which were on TV that day.

The CFS will have the following fleet available this summer:

- 7 fixed wing bombers (Air Tractors)
- 1 high volume helicopter (Skycrane)
- 2 medium volume helicopters (Bell 205A)
- 1 surveillance helicopter (AS355F)
- 3 fixed wing surveillance (Cessna 208, 2 x Cessna 182)
- Access to 3 Motor Accident Commission (MAC) helicopters
- Access to additional aerial firefighting resources across the nation through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre

CFS Acting Chief Officer Andrew Lawson outlined the uses of the aircraft fleet and with the spread of types being able to mix and match depending on the type of fire. For a burning house a helicopter is the most accurate for water dousing. If a quick reaction is needed for a forest fire the fixed wing aircraft (Air Tractors) are the most useful followed by helicopter back-up.

The recent winter and with the later rains, larger than the last 10 – 15 years there is extra grass and undergrowth but with the current cooler weather the fire risk is lessened. However, with a substantial burst of hot/windy weather drying out will rapidly occur with a large increase in fire risk.

Mr Lawson said the aircraft fleet is jointly funded between the State and Federal governments through the National Aerial Fire fighting Centre (NAFC).

“The 14 aircraft offer a flexible fleet contributing to the success of CFS aerial operations. They have been specifically selected for South Australia’s landscape and bushfire conditions,” Mr Lawson said. CFS aircraft will cover high risk areas across South Australia including Lower Eyre Peninsula, Mount Lofty Ranges and Lower South East, during the Fire Danger Season.

“Boasting the highest load volume, amongst the 14-strong fleet, the Aircrane will be stationed in the Adelaide Hills. This impressive machine is a significant asset to the fire-fighting fleet and will remain here for the next three months at least,” Mr Rann said.

The CFS has a large pool of trained fire fighters but more can be utilised. There is a total of 15,500 volunteers which include 10,000 fire fighters.

The display began with a take-off & flyover by the Cessna 208 ODU, followed by the Air Tractors & the choppers. The latter two types demonstrated their firebombing capabilities. The helicopters undertook multiple runs by drawing water from the nearby Warren Reservoir.

In addition to demonstrating the capabilities of the aircraft, the CFS used this event to take the opportunity to thank the ground support volunteers, airfield operators, State and Federal government agencies and the many others who continue to contribute their time, expertise and resources to aid in the delivery of this most important service.

The CFS is a highly professional organization committed to protecting life, property and environmental assets in regional and semi metropolitan South Australia.

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