



6 February 2009

MFB supporting Ambulance Victoria

The MFB's Emergency Medical Response (EMR) program is continuing to support the work of Ambulance Victoria, positively impacting on the well-being of the community as the weather heats up again over the weekend.

The extreme weather conditions experienced in Melbourne's suburbs last week saw the amount of EMR calls handled by MFB firefighters jump, with the same expected during the upcoming hot weather.

Elderly Melbournians made up the majority of patients affected by the stifling heat during the heatwave, resulting in the marked increase in calls.

The MFB's EMR program, which was introduced in 2001, has meant that MFB firefighters are educated in first responder medical procedures and are trained to respond to cardiac arrest and non-breathing patients, giving them the capacity to assist Ambulance Victoria in life and death situations. The program has also seen the MFB become equipped with leading edge emergency medical response equipment.

MFB Commander Colin Bibby said that the public shouldn't be surprised if a fire truck arrives when they call 000 for an ambulance.

"The role of a firefighter is a varied one. The EMR program demonstrates that we do more than fight fires, and our role also includes engaging local communities as well as identifying potential emergency risks and educating people on fire safety.

Ambulance Victoria and the MFB advise the following precautions in order to minimise the adverse affects of the heat:

- Limit outdoor activity and if outdoors, slip, slop, slap by using sunscreen and wearing a hat
- Drink plenty of water and fluids (non-alcoholic)
 - Note: If your doctor normally limits your fluids or you are on fluid tablets, you may need to check how much to drink while the weather is hot
- Take a cool shower or bath
- Look out for warning signs of heat stroke and heat exhaustion such as a rapid heart rate, dizziness, nausea, muscle cramps, vomiting and fainting
- Never leave anyone in a closed parked car. On a 29 degree day, the inside of a car can more than double from 20 degrees to 44 degrees within 10 minutes and after another 10 minutes the mercury hits a deadly 60.2 degrees

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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