

# Bush firefighting resources grow



A/District Manager Cockburn Sound Terry Coles and Hope Valley FRS Senior Firefighter Jamie Hubble, Firefighters Scott Bailey, Michael Sheen and Wade Tully, and Senior Firefighter Derick Stevenson, with an upgraded 2.4 appliance.

Firefighting resources for the southern and northern bushfire seasons are being enhanced with the mobilisation of new and upgraded water tanker appliances.

Funding for four new additional tanker type appliances will ensure that fire crews have the best and most appropriate equipment to protect lives, property and the environment.

Regional Director South Metropolitan Murray Bawden said that during the next southern bushfire season the new appliances will be located at three metropolitan career Fire and Rescue Service stations and manned on a 24/7 basis.

"The new vehicles expected to be available in September, will be a mix of the current urban tanker, 2.4 and 3.4 appliances incorporating a combination of their best features," Murray said.

"Once they have completed operational duties in the Perth metropolitan area they will be relocated to the Kimberley and Pilbara regions as part of FESA's rotating supplementary summer bushfire appliance fleet."

A project advisory team (PAT) was established to manage the development of the new appliances, with career firefighters representing the metropolitan area and a FESA representative on behalf of volunteers from the Kimberley and Pilbara.

"Terms of reference were developed by the project team specifying that the appliances be four wheel drive, have sufficient water and pumping

capacity as well as the capability to carry breathing apparatus and deliver 'A' Class foam for bushfire operations," Murray said.

"Using the latest HINO truck cab chassis, the new appliances will hold 3300 litres of water and provide support at incidents where there is no reticulated water supply or where water quality is poor."

The PAT also engaged the services of an ergonomist to work with the design, and engineer out any risk factors to operational firefighters.

"Firefighters from the project team, technicians from the O'Connor workshops and the ergonomist worked through how the appliances would operate and identified any design issues that needed resolving," Murray said.

The level of expertise and enthusiasm of the PAT members involved in the project has impressed Murray.

"The firefighters have obviously spent a fair amount of time talking to their peers and identified issues to be resolved, as well as a range of solutions to work towards," he said.

## Introduction of upgraded appliances

In support of the new appliance initiative, two urban tanker 2.4 appliances have undergone upgrades.

Acting District Manager Cockburn Sound Terry Coles said they formed part of FESA's commitment to improved coordinated response to bushfires.

"Originally based in country regions, the urban tankers underwent several upgrades at the FESA workshops before going operational at two suburban fire stations in Hope Valley and Maddington," Terry said.

"The refurbished appliances which are crewed by two firefighters, were fitted with low water tank alarms, breathing apparatus and the installation of WAERN radio communications.

"Other improvements were the fitting of an 'A' Class foam inductor and compressed air storage tank that enables deflated tyres to be returned to the recommended pressures before crews leave the fire ground."

The upgraded appliances have a rear mounted HATZ diesel driven pump with an extended capacity of 1500 litres per minute.

Each tanker is also equipped with suction hoses to allow the tanker to draw water from static supplies.

Terry was involved in training firefighters who crewed the urban tankers and said the revamped appliances had proven themselves in the field and been well received.