

Friday, 14 May 2009

## **FIREFIGHTERS HONOURED OVER KILBURN BLAZE AS LATEST RECRUITS GRADUATE**

The heroic efforts of six MFS officers will be officially recognised this morning for their role in battling one of Adelaide's largest industrial fires at a Kilburn plastics factory late last year.

Their exceptional efforts will be rewarded at a special ceremony where 19 of South Australia's newest fire-fighters will graduate at **MFS Headquarters at 11.00 am.**

Minister for Emergency Services, Michael Wright, said the 6 individuals being honoured today showed great courage as they fought the Kilburn blaze on 14 September 2009.

"During this significant industrial inferno, these fire-fighters helped to drastically reduce the risks to members of the community, their peers and ensured that the fire was brought under control and doused quickly.

"These fire-fighters have gone above and beyond the call of duty. It is only appropriate that they be recognised before a ceremony of graduating fire-fighters, who can aspire to their professionalism and dedication as they embark on their own fire-fighting careers," Minister Wright said.

MFS Chief Officer, Grant Lupton said the Kilburn fire threatened two factories, a foundry and an industrial-sized LP Gas cylinder, all of which were saved.

"The incident prompted a major MFS response. All fire-fighters involved in this incident displayed remarkable skill and team-work, especially in the case of the six we will honour today. The supportive role of the Country Fire Service (CFS) in this incident cannot be forgotten, and I again extend my thanks to CFS staff and volunteers who greatly assisted," MFS Chief Officer Lupton says.

The serving MFS fire-fighters who'll be honoured are; Station Officer John Leach, Senior Fire-fighters Kent Cooper and Timothy Slaven and Fire-fighters Justin Meldrum, Andrew French and Matthew Hodder.

Their Special Mention will be witnessed by 19 MFS recruits who will graduate today after completing a gruelling 14 week training course.

Chief Officer Lupton says the new recruits have endured tough physical challenges over the last three and a half months.

"These new fire-fighters have a good appreciation of the skill and physical exertion required to combat a structure fire such as the Kilburn plastics fire.

“I’m sure they’ll look to the fire-fighters who’ll be honoured today with great admiration and be reminded of the many challenges that lie ahead for each of them,” Chief Officer Lupton says.

The recruits hail from various backgrounds such as aquatics, banking, sales, kingfish farm hand, Royal Australian Navy and Army, trades, social work and environmental studies.

The MFS encourages all new recruits to commit to lifelong learning and to explore the various career paths available to them.