



Media Release  
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## **Stabicraft to fight bushfires in Victoria**

A new weapon to fight life-threatening bushfires in rural Victoria has been unveiled – an Invercargill-manufactured Stabicraft boat.

As the fire season looms once again, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Eildon Brigade which looks after Lake Eildon in Victoria's north-east, has welcomed possession of its customised Stabicraft 859 Supercab – a ground-breaking boat that been hailed “the pinnacle of trailerable fire response vessels in Australia”.

The Southland innovation will play a vital role in the Eildon region, which was devastated when Australia's worst bushfires in history raged on what's now solemnly known as Black Saturday. The fires on February 7, 2009, claimed 173 lives, injured 500 people, destroyed 2200 homes and left 7500 homeless.

The picturesque tourism spot on the shores of Lake Eildon – the house-boating capital of Australia – is never immune from the threat of bushfires.

CFA Coast Guard Liaison David Goldfinch said the Eildon CFA was “thrilled” with its new boat.

“This vessel is going to play a huge role in any fires they have up there, either on the water's edge or the water itself,” he said.

“It will also support any fire-fighting operations on land in the area ... you can never have enough tools in the fight against fires.”

Purpose-built, the boat features full-height through-hull bow access via a folding bow ramp and gas strut raised front windscreen.

“They can go right up against the shore to get people on or off – the design works fantastically well,” Mr Goldfinch said.

“They can now fulfil their role in transporting fire-fighters across the lake as well as being a rescue vessel.”

The boat has full fire-fighting capabilities thanks to a through-hull water pick-up system which carts water to a roof-mounted remote-controlled monitor.

“I know Stabicraft through my work with the Safety Beach Coastguard which has an 859 boat ... the vessel's brilliant in all kinds of weather, it's very forgiving and you feel very safe in it,” he said.

Purchased from MY Marine in Dromana on Melbourne's Mornington Peninsula, co-director Michael Rozakis described the CFA's newest recruit as “a sensational vessel”.

“Stabicraft, which are already the boat of choice for several Victorian coastguards, make excellent rescue vessels. The hull design is unique and it gives the confidence to have all different crew driving the boat and know they're in safe hands – its safety and stability without compromise,” he said.

"I have no doubt that it was Stabcraft's reputation as well as the competitive tender which helped to win the contract.

"I'm confident there's going to be more and more of these boats – they're such a crucial tool in the battle against bush fires."

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