

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00AM FEBRUARY 26TH

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW BUSHFIRE FUND

The Australian International Airshow and Defence Exposition has announced a major contribution to Victoria's Bushfire Appeal.

Aerospace Australia Limited, the organiser of the International Aerospace & Defence Exposition at Avalon 2009, has pledged \$250,000 to fund research into the use of aviation and aerospace technology in bushfire management.

CEO Ian Honnery says as the first 'hallmark' major event in Victoria since the catastrophic 'black Saturday' bushfires, we wanted to make a real contribution to help with the community's recovery.

"Hopefully this research will make a concrete contribution to combating such horrific events in years to come," Mr Honnery says.

Avalon 2009 will reach out to those who have been affected by the recent bushfires and, at the same time, honour their suffering and resilience by promoting the development of technology which may be of assistance in the future.

In addition, Avalon 2009 has joined with the Country Fire Authority, to incorporate a number of special events into the Airshow program to pay tribute to all who have been affected by this national tragedy.

Subject to operational requirements, there will be a special parade of emergency services appliances, including aircraft and helicopters on each of the public days.

On Friday March 13th, a special 'torchlight ceremony', involving hundreds of Country Fire Authority personnel will also be held as part of the 'Friday Night Alight' activities.

As a mark of respect, Avalon 2009 organisers have also taken the decision to cancel the 'Wall of Fire' displays during the Airshow.

"We felt that during a time when the community is still coming to grips with the tragic events of 'black Saturday' and the on-going fire threats to various communities, cancelling the 'Wall of Fire' was the right thing to do," Mr Honnery says.

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AVALON2009

**AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW
AND AEROSPACE & DEFENCE EXPOSITION**

10-15 MARCH 2009 GEELONG VICTORIA

The Australian International Airshow and the Country Fire Authority will together also show their support for the official Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

CFA Regional Operations Manager Bob Barry says hundreds of Country Fire Authority volunteers will be collecting donations from Airshow patrons across all six days of the event.

“We are very pleased to be working with the Airshow on this appeal, which recognises not only the efforts of our own CFA community, but also the community at large,” Mr Barry says.

A sentiment echoed by Airshow CEO Ian Honnery.

“As a community based not-for-profit organisation, reliant on an army of nearly one thousand volunteers from Victoria and all over Australia, we are keen to reciprocate the support we have received during the event from the Victorian Community since 1992, when the event was first held at Avalon.”

The Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airport near Geelong is presented with major support from its principal partners – the Australian Department of Defence, the Government of Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong.

PICTURE/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

WHEN: Thursday February 26th

TIME: 10:30am

LOCATION: Avalon Airport, off Beach Road, Avalon

WHO: Airshow CEO Ian Honnery and CFA Operations Manager Region 7, Bob Barry AFSM

NOTE: Media should turn into Avalon Airport off Beach road and assemble near the first roundabout. All media will then be escorted onto the site.

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