



Media release

Friday 31 October 2014

New water tanker ready for Selwyn Summer

The newest and largest addition to the Selwyn Rural Fire water tanker fleet is now ready for service.

A 13,000 litre-capacity water tanker has joined the Selwyn Rural Fire fleet of 19 vehicles, which includes nine other water tankers across the district.

Getting the purpose-built tanker up and running marks the completion of a unique brigade-led project. A used milk tanker was turned into an operational fire tanker, with the design and construction involving a number of local volunteer firefighters including Steve Trigg, Quentin Inkersell, John Trounson and Mike Allen.

The truck is designed for rural fire fighting and includes two purpose built water tanks, added space for equipment storage and high volume pumping units on the back of the truck which allows fire fighters to run hoses over large distances.

Steve Trigg, Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the Rolleston Volunteer Fire Brigade, led the tanker project. "This is the first time the community has been involved with a tanker project," he says. "It wouldn't have been possible without the support of a number of proud local businesses."

Taylor Coal, Westland Milk and SRS Sawmill contributed \$10,000 each and the Selwyn District Council contributed \$120,000.

"The team was also supported by Barclay Engineering, Hollands Collision Repairs, Independent Signs and Selwyn Auto who all went out of their way to make the project work," says Mr Trigg.

The Selwyn Rural Fire Authority is part of Selwyn District Council and is responsible for fire suppression outside of urban areas in Selwyn. The Rural Fire Authority covers 376,000 hectares and excludes areas managed by the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Defence. The New Zealand Fire Service responds to fire callouts in townships but both services work together to share resources and personnel to fight fires outside townships.

Selwyn District Council's Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer Douglas Marshall says this will be the largest water tanker in the Selwyn Rural Fire fleet, and will help increase the brigade's ability to fight fires, particularly in rural areas where water is often not easily accessible to put out vegetation fires.

In the year 2012/2013, 5,313 hectares of vegetation was burnt as a result of fires throughout New Zealand. This includes more than 1,000 hectares of native or exotic forest, and close to 4,000 hectares of grass, tussocks and scrub nationwide. There were 129 vegetation call outs within the Selwyn Rural Fire Authority area during this time.

Steve Trigg, who has been a firefighter for 24 years, says summer is the busiest season for attending fire callouts in Selwyn, so the new tanker will help deliver large quantities of water to fight these fires.

"In summer we are often called out to rural vegetation fires and there have been times where we've had limited access to a water source making it very difficult to control the fire. With this new water tanker we'll be able to work quickly and efficiently to control and extinguish fires."

The new Selwyn Rural Water Tanker will be based at the Rolleston Fire Station and will be on call to assist with firefighting in both rural and urban areas when large supplies of water are needed.

Ends

Photos attached:

From left: Tony Howe, Westland Milk; Paul Gillett, SRS Sawmill; Steve Trigg, Rolleston Fire Brigade; Glenys Perkins, Taylor Coal; Mayor Kelvin Coe, Selwyn Mayor; Bryan McCorkindale, SRS Sawmill.

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