



## **DAVID MORRIS MP**

**Member for Mornington**

**Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment  
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government**

### **Brigade Stamp Duty Must Be Refunded**

**Legislative Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010**

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) — I raise a matter this evening for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The end of this week marks the anniversary of Black Saturday. It is a year since swathes of country Victoria were devastated by fire, a year since so many lives ended in tragedy.

In the months since, many plaudits have quite rightly been directed to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, those men and women who have given so much and continue to give so much to protect the lives and property of their fellow Victorians.

Sadly, as is often the case, the government's words have not been backed up by action.

I am referring to the refusal of VicRoads to register a vehicle for the Mount Martha fire brigade without first receiving payment of \$2560 in stamp duty. The action I seek is that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services arrange to immediately reimburse the \$2560 erroneously charged in stamp duty to the Mount Martha fire brigade.

The vehicle in question is a newly upgraded light and salvage unit purchased from Patterson Cheney in Dandenong. The brigade replaced an existing 12-year-old vehicle and had the equipment box reattached onto a new cab chassis. The unit has been used for many years to provide lighting for incidents, both locally and across the state. It has been used not only for motor vehicle accidents but also during the summer fire season to transport extra crews to staging areas and particularly for staging area management.

The unit has been used at Swifts Creek, Heyfield and Moondarra and was used last year at the Delburn complex fires, Bunyip State Forest and Wesburn for 18 days straight during the Black Saturday fires. During that time, 223 12-hour shift days were provided by the brigade. It is an impressive record.

The project has cost the brigade just over \$100 000. It is money that has been raised by the community; it is money that should rightly be used by the community. Should the duty have been charged?

The Duties Act is pretty clear, that duty is not chargeable for vehicles used by CFA brigades or for a vehicle that is specifically equipped for combating fires. This vehicle meets those criteria on both counts.

It is time for the government to put its money where its mouth is and refund in full the \$2560 wrongly demanded of the Mount Martha brigade and the Mount Martha community.

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