

## Delivering fire safety information to those most at risk

Frank Stockton, Julie Harris

Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, North Fitzroy

Older people, particularly those aged 65 years and over have an increased risk of fire fatality and injury and despite comprising around only 13% of our current population they account for more than 22% of all fire related deaths. As the population ages, it will dramatically increase the number of people in this high risk group.

By 2020 this will translate into one in every four people being aged 65 years and over and a further one in four suffering a disability the single largest cause of which will be dementia by 2016. This and the continuing shift toward a community care model will support older people with higher levels of disability than ever before to remain living at home.

These drivers present a strong and clear imperative for fire services to identify sustainable methods of delivering the fire safety message into the homes of older Australians now rather than later. The MFB has developed a three point strategy which will effectively reach those most at risk by acknowledging and utilizing the basic relationship between vulnerable at risk people and those who care for them.

This strategy will target care providers who are:

1. Friends and family who provide familial and unpaid support to people in their homes.
2. Direct care workers who provide practical assistance and support to people in their homes.
3. Community assessment workers whose role encompasses initial needs assessment of people in their homes.

To achieve the maximum community safety benefit MFB has enlisted the support of ten other fire services to broaden the first two strategies into national initiatives with the third highly transportable. All three utilize existing relationships which have already identified those most at risk requiring support and assistance to remain living in their homes.

Importantly these strategies will also deliver basic fire safety information across a range of government funded programs including Home and Community Care (HACC), Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) EACH Dementia, Veterans Home Care, Carer Respite Services and post acute care programs.

PowerPoint will include comprehensive details and flow chart diagram.