



**St Florian's Day**  
4 May 2013  
NSW Rural Fire Service  
15 Carter Street, Lidcombe



INTERNAL  
BRAVERY & SERVICE  
AWARDS CEREMONY  
2013

## THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE INTERNAL BRAVERY AND SERVICE AWARDS

The Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, in recognition of acts of bravery and outstanding service, has established an internal awards system. The Awards were instituted on 1 February 1999. The establishment of an internal awards system is authorised under the Rural Fires Act 1997 and accompanying Regulations. Eligibility for these Awards is extended to all members of the Service as defined within the Act and Regulations.

Nominations for awards must be lodged in accordance with the Service Standards 9.1.1 and on the prescribed nomination form. The Service Standards and nomination form are available on the NSW RFS Intranet, Internet and on MyRFS. Copies are also available from Region, Zone, Team and District Offices. Nominations for Internal Bravery and Service Awards close annually on 1 October for presentation on St Florian's Day, 4 May in the following year.

Nominations are sent to the Awards Committee. The Committee consists of representatives from the volunteers and salaried staff of the Service appointed by the Commissioner and is required to fully examine each nomination for eligibility. Once a nomination has been assessed and deemed to be eligible, the Committee then makes a formal recommendation to the Commissioner. If a nominee accepts the nomination, the full details of the member being recognised are then officially listed in the NSW RFS Awards Register. Individuals may be nominated for the Award for Valour, the Commissioner's Commendations for Bravery and for Service or the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Individual and/or Units). Brigades or formally comprised units may also be nominated for the Unit Citation for either Bravery or Service.

The functions of the Awards Committee notwithstanding, the Commissioner may award an Internal Bravery or Service Award to any person at any time and for any reason.

At the Awards Ceremony on 4 May 2013, 14 individual and 11 group recipients are to be acknowledged by the Commissioner. Drawn from the Service's Regions and Headquarters these recipients are presented with Awards in recognition of outstanding bravery or service. The fourth of May is chosen each year for the Awards Ceremony as it is the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters and International Firefighter's Day.

## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

*Australians all let us rejoice,  
For we are young and free;  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;  
Our home is girt by sea;  
Our land abounds in nature's gifts  
Of beauty rich and rare;  
In history's page, let every stage  
Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.*

*Beneath our radiant Southern Cross  
We'll toil with hearts and hands;  
To make this Commonwealth of ours  
Renowned of all the lands;  
For those who've come across the seas  
We've boundless plains to share;  
With courage let us all combine  
To Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.*

## THE ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

### National Anthem

NSW RFS Pipes and Drums and State Protocol Squad

### Welcome to Guests

Manager Membership Administration, Lisa Chih

### Prayer

Senior Chaplain, Major Ian Spall

### Address

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

### Address

The Hon. Michael Gallacher MLC  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

### Presentation of Awards

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

### Photography

All recipients will be photographed during and following the conclusion of proceedings. A complimentary CD of group and individual photographs will be posted to each recipient.

### Lunch

Recipients and their guests are invited to join the Commissioner for lunch in the marquee and outdoor terrace area

*We wish to thank the NSW RFS Pipes and Drums and State Protocol Squad  
for their assistance during today's festivities.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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### Group Captain Craig Bardney and Group Captain Colin Smeeth

Myall Park Rural Fire Brigade and Wyangan Rural Fire Brigade, MIA Zone,  
Region South

Group Captain Craig Bardney joined the Myall Park Rural Fire Brigade in 1983 and took up the position of Captain in 1996, a position which he still holds today.

Group Captain Colin Smeeth joined the Wyangan Rural Fire Brigade in 1967 and has been Captain and Group Captain since 1996.

Both Craig and Colin are dedicated volunteers and with a varied skill and knowledge base they show a positive and proactive attitude to all assignments they are given.

Following the devastating floods of 7 March 2012 Group Captain Craig Bardney assisted by Group Captain Colin Smeeth coordinated the massive cleanup of Yenda Township. They had the onerous task of coordinating the strike teams that had been sent to Yenda to assist the residents in cleaning up their yards and homes, as well as handling the requests for help from the residents.

Some of the tasks that had to be completed were; pumping water out of yards, moving furniture, ripping up floor coverings and moving rubbish to the front streets for local Council collection. Craig and Colin also kept the Disaster Management Team updated with regular sit reps.

Not only were Craig and Colin required to coordinate both parties (residents and volunteers), they also listened to residents who just needed to tell their stories of horror and damage that the flood had caused. They recognised the need for further assistance and arranged for the District to organise the NSW Rural Fire Service Chaplains to be present at Yenda for a few days to speak to those involved in the cleanup.

The cleanup of Yenda was finished on 23 March 2012. Both Craig and Colin showed exemplarity compassion, patience and leadership and without their assistance, skills and knowledge the cleanup of Yenda would not have happened as quickly or efficiently.

*Group Captain Craig Bardney and Group Captain Colin Smeeth are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

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## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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### Firefighter Vernon Dunning

Cooma Rural Fire Brigade, Monaro, Region South

Firefighter Vernon Dunning has been actively involved in the Cooma Rural Fire Brigade since 1983. Vernon has served as Deputy Captain, Secretary, Equipment Officer and President. He was appointed the Shire's Honorary Deputy Fire Control Officer in the 1990s and continued to serve the community in this position for five years.

Vernon was pivotal in the delivery of the NSW RFS Secondary Schools Cadet Program to the Monaro area. For the past four years, Vernon has been the principle coordinator and instructor for the Cadet Program. To date, he has been instrumental in the training of more than 200 Cadets. Some of these Cadets have continued their service since their initial training to become members of their local brigades.

Vernon continues to build the capability of the cadet program, by encouraging and training additional Cadet Coordinators. He delivered four Cadet Programs in 2012, including a program for special education unit pupils at Monaro High School.

Vernon is known by Monaro Team as someone who consistently responds to emergencies. He is also heavily involved in brigade activities, whether it be as a trainer and assessor, or attending community street meetings or visiting schools to build community resilience and promote fire safety. Despite all of his commitments, Vernon stills finds time to mow the lawns and tend to the gardens at the Brigade Station and Fire Control Centre.

Vernon is a Communications Officer and has frequently been a Fire Band Radio Operator during incidents of all sizes, this includes a number of Section 44's. Vernon's involvement as a leader in the newly formed Cooma Monaro District Support Unit is reassuring to the other Support Unit volunteers.

Vernon is reliable, honourable, dependable, humble and a dedicated volunteer who at all times can be counted on by the Cooma Rural Fire Brigade.

*Firefighter Dunning is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

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## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### **Group Captain Leslie Fowler**

Central Warren Rural Fire Brigade, North West Zone, Region West

Group Captain Leslie Fowler has been a member of the Central Warren Rural Fire Brigade since 2009 and has held roles as Brigade Secretary, Treasurer, and President. He became Captain of the Central Warren Brigade in 2011 and recently became a Group Captain within the Warren Fire Control Centre.

Leslie responded to a cotton fire in the storage area at the Queensland Cotton Facility on the outskirts of Warren in September 2012. As the "First In Officer" on the first NSW Rural Fire Service firefighting appliance on scene, Leslie set up all necessary protocols and structures to work with Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) and other Emergency Services on scene. The fire which FRNSW assumed control of, was of such a large scale that FRNSW set up an Incident Management Team at the top level of their scale. Leslie became the contact between all other emergency contacts and the NSW Rural Fire Service. At the same time he also commanded nine other RFS Brigades and other support personnel who were responded from local Districts and adjoining Zones. Leslie took control and he commanded in a very positive, consistent manner giving clear instructions to ensure all operational matters were understood. He remained calm at all times. For the Queensland Cotton Company the fire caused eight million dollars worth of damage with the loss of hundreds of bales of cotton.

At the all Agency Level 3 Debrief conducted with FRNSW personnel from 'Lessons Learnt' Operations Section, Leslie was the only person named in the debrief for his cool, calm and positive leadership which saw all the emergency services working cooperatively. The manner in which Leslie undertook his role was again raised at the latest local Emergency Management Committee Meeting in Warren. Leslie has bought great credit to himself, his Brigade, the Zone, and the entire NSW Rural Fire Service well above what would be expected from anyone in the same role and situation.

*Group Captain Fowler is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### Deputy Captain Raymond Hehir

Murrumbateman Rural Fire Brigade, Southern Tablelands Zone, Region South

Deputy Captain Raymond Hehir has held his position in the Murrumbateman Rural Fire Brigade since 2002 and has worked tirelessly to maintain the fire station at peak efficiency.

Ray demonstrated exemplary effort over an extended period of time in the building of the extension to the fire station and was involved in the design and organisation of all the works. This ranged from steering plans through the local council, negotiating required modifications, organising drainage and sewerage works to digging and building. The facility is now at a stage where it can house all of the Brigade's trucks and equipment. Not content to cease his efforts there, Ray is continuing with the management of this fit-out to ensure the fire station is prepared for the upcoming fire season. The station is a reflection of Ray's tireless voluntary efforts and has saved the Brigade thousands of dollars and kept the shed on track to completion.

Ray was also involved in managing a major fundraising event by organising parking at the Murrumbateman Field Day. This task involved several days of preparation, participation over two long days and coordinating a large group of volunteer members. After the event, there was another day of clean up work which Ray managed diligently, and for a considerable period on his own. Patrons commented on how smoothly the entry to the event occurred and appreciated the work of the brigade members. Compared to previous years a major improvement was seen.

*Deputy Captain Hehir is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### Captain Leslie Irvin

Barellan Rural Fire Brigade, MIA Zone, Region South

Captain Leslie Irvin has been a member of the Barellan Rural Fire Service Brigade since 1967. He held the position of Deputy Captain of the Brigade from 2003 until 2010 and then became Captain.

On Saturday 3 March 2012 significant flooding occurred across South West NSW bringing widespread damage to the area. The township of Barellan was impacted by the rising waters of the Mirrool Creek. More than half the town was inundated as a result of the flooding. Leslie, with the assistance of the local Police Officer, took charge and initiated the evacuation of residents given the amount of flood water, the isolation of the township and the loss of essential services. During the following five days Leslie organised local and out-of-area crews to assist with pumping and drainage operations to remove all water from the township. Due to Leslie's leadership skills and his detailed understanding of the local environment the town was drained which allowed inundated houses to be cleaned up much sooner than thought possible. This allowed most of the people of Barellan to return to their homes and for normality to be restored to the community within the week.

The actions of Leslie in this leadership role are in line with the proud tradition of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

*Captain Irvin is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### **Dominic Lane ASFM**

(Former) Director, Regional and Infrastructure Services

Dominic Lane first joined the NSW Rural Fire Service in November 1984 as an active member of the Milbrulong Brigade in the Lockhart Shire. In 1993, he became the Honorary Deputy Fire Control Officer of Lockhart Shire Council, and has also held positions of Fire Control Officer, Acting Manager, Policy and Standards and Regional Manager West. Under the guidance and leadership of Dominic, Regional Office West was successful in obtaining a Commissioner's Commendation for Service for providing "The highest standard of Leadership and Support to the Districts" in May 2007.

Dominic continued his career advancement by accepting the acting Executive Director, Operations and Regional Services role in 2007. In October 2008, Dominic was appointed Director Regional Services and following the realignment of 2012, he was appointed Director, Regional and Infrastructure Services, a position he held until his most recent appointment as Commissioner of the ACT Emergency Services. Dominic was also awarded the AFSM for his services to the RFS.

Dominic has always shown extraordinary communication skills, in a vast array of environments, from volunteer engagement sessions (40 plus forums all over NSW In 2012), to briefings with Premiers, Ministers, CEO's of Government agencies, Emergency Service organisations, the Media and the individual volunteer.

Dominic's leadership ability has been exceptional. He has the rare and wonderful skill of being able to get diverse groups, opinions and organisations onto the same page. The recent successful review of rank, undertaken by Dominic and his team, was one of the most comprehensive and exhaustive consultative and open reviews undertaken by the RFS. Dominic has always put the RFS and it's members as his highest priority, doing all in his power to ensure that the RFS' good name, integrity and reputation were upheld.

*Dominic Lane is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### **Firefighter Judith Moore**

Eurobodalla Fire Control Support, Far South Coast, Region South

Firefighter Judith Moore is a long serving and committed member of the Eurobodalla District. Judith's service commenced as an inaugural member of the Potato Point Rural Fire Brigade in 1987. For many years she has undertaken both bush firefighting as well as administrative roles within the Brigade.

Judith was one of the initial members representing the Eurobodalla District in the, then named Bushfire Brigade Association. This was one of the first associations which gave that District's volunteers the opportunity to voice issues and successes at a state level. It would have been an Association that eventually evolved into the current Rural Fire Service Association. Judith promoted the Association to members and represented the Eurobodalla District at out of area meetings ensuring our members had their input into important issues affecting NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers and sharing the districts successes across the State.

Judith is a member who is always there when required. She is reliable with a pleasant, positive and professional disposition. Judith has been a radio operator and communications centre assistant since joining and has assisted Fire Control Centre administration on a weekly basis. Judith has assisted with the coordination of district events and numerous brigade support services throughout the Shire. Judith continuously makes herself available to assist all officers, taking time to discuss and work through any task that is required of her.

Judith is a "salt of the earth" member whose skill base and expertise in all aspects of the administration and communications sectors within the Fire Control Centre are second to none. Her commitment to continuous improvement both personally and for the advancement of the district and its volunteers, is to be commended.

*Firefighter Moore is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### Senior Deputy Captain Helen Riedl

Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade, Far South Coast, Region South

Senior Deputy Captain Helen Riedl commenced with the NSW Rural Fire Service in 1997. She is qualified as a Village Firefighter, Community Engagement Facilitator and Airbase Radio Operator. Helen has been the Secretary, Treasurer, and Community Engagement Officer for the Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade since 2005. Over the years, Helen has also been a First Aid Officer and has held the Vice Presidency of the Brigade.

Helen is also the Communications Senior Deputy Captain of the Eurobodalla Operations Support Group. This group supports the Incident Management Team operations during emergency declarations not only within the Eurobodalla Shire but surrounding districts and districts around the State.

Helen is consistently striving to promote and educate Brigades in the delivery of community engagement and the need for communities to prepare their properties in the event of a bush fire. Helen has recruited members into the Eurobodalla Community Engagement Team and is the driving force behind Community Engagement within the Far South Coast Team. In 2012, Helen was successful in her nomination for delegate on the Rural Fire Service Association State Community Engagement Sub Committee representing NSW Rural Fire Service Region South.

Helen has contributed above and beyond in the area of community engagement. Her knowledge, professionalism and commitment to her Brigade, the Service and the Community is to be commended.

*Senior Deputy Captain Riedl is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

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### **Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM**

Director, Operational Services

Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers first joined the NSW Rural Fire Service as a volunteer in 1979. In 1995, he became the Deputy Fire Control Officer at Greater Taree City Council and has also held positions of Fire Control Officer and Executive Director, Regional Management and Planning. In July 2008, Rob was appointed to his current position of Director Operational Services.

During the Royal Commission into the 2009 Black Saturday Bush Fires in Victoria, Rob represented NSW in two hearings as the lead combat agency for bush fires. At the conclusion of the Commission, Rob played an instrumental role in the NSW 'whole of government' analysis and response to the Commission's interim and final reports.

During 2010, Rob continued to represent NSW at the highest levels which included the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council National Development of 'Prepare .Act. Survive' program as a replacement for 'stay and defend'. Rob also represented NSW fire agencies on the Federal Government's Bush Fire Arson Taskforce and the Federal Bush Fire Warnings Task Force which updated the Fire Danger Rating scale and established warning arrangements.

At the same time, Rob implemented enhancements to a number of programs running in his area of responsibility including the enhancement to the State Mitigation Support Services work crews and the establishment of the Rapid Aerial Response Teams and the enhancement of Remote Area Fire Fighting Teams to ensure consistency of equipment, training and practice. Rob also directed the establishment of a Vulnerable Communities Program to identify at risk communities and develop ways of protecting them as well as the establishment of the Neighbourhood Safer Places Program.

*Deputy Commissioner Rogers is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### **Captain Brian Schloeffel**

Burrabadine Rural Fire Brigade, Orana, Region West

Captain Brian Schloeffel's involvement with the NSW Rural Fire Service commenced in 1970 when he held the position of Vice Captain and later, Captain of the Bunglegumbie Rural Fire Brigade. When the Bunglegumbie Brigade was amalgamated with Burrabadine Rural Fire Brigade, Brian was elected Vice Captain and later Captain of the Burrabadine Brigade, a position he still holds today.

Brian has been involved in many of the major fires, including the Christmas Day fire of 1984 in Dubbo, the Blue Mountains fires of 1994 and the major fire in Goonoo Forest in 2007. During the past 10 years, Burrabadine Brigade has attended an average of 19 callouts per year. The range of incidents is diverse and includes motor vehicle accidents, as well as vegetation, building and garbage tip fires. Brian has attended the vast majority of these callouts. His expertise and diligence has resulted in his crews maintaining an exemplary safety record.

Brian has also been involved in many activities associated with the Rural Fire Service. He was instrumental in a decision in the 1990s for Burrabadine to fund and purchase a small firefighting vehicle to act as a fast response vehicle for the western extremity of the Brigade area.

He was involved in the construction of the Burrabadine Brigade Station in 1993. Brian was involved in the raising of funds for the cost of the shed, the design of the shed and the organisation of the TAFE "Skillshare" group who did the actual construction work.

Brian was a member of the team who went to Nyngan in 1990 to help strengthen the flood levy bank. After the levy bank broke he also helped evacuate the residents of the town.

*Captain Schloeffel is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### Rebel Talbert

Group Manager, Operational and Mitigation Support Services

Rebel Talbert first joined the NSW Rural Fire Service as a volunteer in 2002. In 2003, she accepted the position of Media Officer, Corporate Communications and has subsequently held positions of Media Advisor and Media Manager. In September 2010, Rebel was appointed to her current position of Group Manager, Operational and Mitigation Support Services.

Also in 2010, following the release of the Interim Report of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Rebel undertook a 12 month secondment to the Office of Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) Victoria in the capacity of Deputy Director Media and Community Relations to assist with the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

During this time, Rebel provided valuable insights using her NSW experiences to assist Victoria in developing implementation strategies and played a key role in helping to shape the OESC element of the Victorian response to the Royal Commission's final report and recommendations. In particular Rebel assisted the OESC to understand the approach to crucial public bush fire information policy in NSW.

Rebel participated in high level national forums/ working parties such as the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council National Development of the 'Prepare.Act.Survive' Program as a replacement for 'stay and defend' and the Federal Bush Fire Warnings Task Force which updated the Fire Danger Rating scale and established warning arrangements.

Since her appointment as Group Manager Operational & Mitigation Support Services Ms Talbert has played a key role in assisting with the enhancement to the State Mitigation Support Services work crews. She has assisted in establishment of the Rapid Aerial Response Teams as well as the enhancement of Remote Area Fire Fighting Teams to ensure consistency of equipment, training and practice.

*Rebel Talbert is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE

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### Firefighter Malcolm Weir

Gerringong Rural Fire Brigade, Illawarra, Region East

Firefighter Malcolm Weir first joined the Gerringong Bush Fire Brigade in 1962. His great passion for the local community saw Malcolm serve as Brigade Captain from 1969 to 1994 and remains to date the longest serving Captain of the Gerringong Rural Fire Brigade.

During his 51 years in the Service, Malcolm has seen some major changes. Up until the year 2000, Malcolm had attended most, if not all the major fires and other incidents in the area including a house fire in Gerringong in 1963, wildfires in Foxground in 1968 as well as the Gerroa to Shoalhaven Heads fires in 1982. Gerringong Brigade has been called to major car accidents with many of these being fatalities. Malcolm has seen and dealt with a variety of difficult situations both as a member and as Captain.

Malcolm is still very active in the Brigade today, attending day time call outs, training and meetings. Malcolm has done all this while managing a dairy farm and family. He is a Life Member of the Brigade and a mentor to the newer and older members of the Brigade. Malcolm can be seen at incidents now giving advice to members or correcting little mistakes or just tucking in a collar. Malcolm is very proud to be a part of the brigade and the Service.

The Brigade looks to Malcolm for advice on many Brigade decisions. He has a keen input into the Brigade giving suggestions on many Brigade matters. This included input into the new Fire Station that was built in 2006.

Malcolm is still very active within the Brigade today. To have a person of Malcolm's calibre still active and in tune with new technology and techniques is a great asset to the Brigade and to the Service.

*Firefighter Weir is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (INDIVIDUAL)

*Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.*

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### **Sharon Saunders**

Coordinator, Audit, Inquiries and Legal, NSW RFS Headquarters in Lidcombe

Sharon Saunders has been a staff member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 2000.

The NSW Rural Fire Service was involved in large and complex legal proceedings relating to fires which caused the losses in the Warragamba, Wallacia, Silverdale and Mulgoa areas on 25 December 2001. The resulting claims were heard before the Supreme Court of NSW from October 2011 to May 2012. During that time more than 20 NSW Rural Fire Service volunteer and staff members were called to give evidence.

Sharon provided those witnesses with all the support she could, attending meetings outside of work hours, including weekends, to prepare them for their appearances. She also accompanied each witness to court when they appeared to give their evidence.

Volunteers, staff and the legal team representing the State have all expressed their gratitude for Sharon's tireless work to support them throughout the proceedings. Her efforts are highly commendable.

*Sharon Saunders is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Individual).*

## COMMISSIONER'S UNIT CITATION FOR SERVICE

*Awarded to crews, brigades, groups, or organised units to recognise outstanding service of a meritorious nature, such as group action in relation to fire service duties, group work performance, or other outstanding or meritorious service not involving bravery.*

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### **Eurobodalla Training Centre Support Group**

Far South Coast, Region South

#### **Deputy Group Captain Bruce Smith**

**Senior Deputy Captain Robert Dredge**

**Senior Deputy Captain Stanley Towers**

Deputy Group Captain Bruce Smith has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1961. He was the Deputy Captain and later Captain of Moruya Rural Fire Brigade. In 1996 Bruce was elected Deputy Group Captain.

Senior Deputy Captain Robert Dredge has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1970. He has held the field officer positions of Deputy Captain and Senior Deputy Captain of Tuross Heads Rural Fire Brigade, a position he currently holds today.

Senior Deputy Stanley Towers has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1994. He was elected Senior Deputy Captain with Batemans Bay Rural Fire Brigade in 1997, transferred to Durras South Rural Fire Brigade in 2002 and elected to the role of Senior Deputy Captain in 2004, the position he currently holds today.

All three of these members are available to assist not only within their local community, but those within NSW and interstate by being a Crew Member or Crew Leader to emergencies requesting assistance. They also offer assistance to the Eurobodalla Operations Officer to undertake tasks in the day to day requirements of the Eurobodalla District.

Bruce, Robert and Stanley also spend three days a week undertaking maintenance of the Eurobodalla Training Centre grounds, training props, collect and pick up consumables used in hot fire training events between Pambula, Queanbeyan and Batemans Bay. The Training Centre consists of 14 acres of lawns, props and a very large lecture complex. Stanley, Bruce and Robert have groomed and maintained the Training Centre to be the place of excellence it is today. The current condition of the Eurobodalla Training Centre as a whole is a credit to all three members, they are highly valued and respected by others for the work they undertake.

*Deputy Group Captain Smith, Senior Deputy Captain Dredge and Senior Deputy Captain Towers, are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service.*

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## COMMISSIONER'S UNIT CITATION FOR SERVICE

*Awarded to crews, brigades, groups, or organised units to recognise outstanding service of a meritorious nature, such as group action in relation to fire service duties, group work performance, or other outstanding or meritorious service not involving bravery.*

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**Moree Rural Fire Brigade & Narrabri Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade**  
Namoi Gwydir, Region North

**Rhonda Gallagher, Robert Gallagher, Joseph Maher, Steve Maher, Peter Mitchell, Jonathon Walker**  
(Moree Rural Fire Brigade)

**Jack Bailey, Gregory Cassidy, Megan Davies, Philip Davies**  
(Narrabri Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade)

In November 2011, natural disaster areas were declared across flood-hit parts of Northern New South Wales, including towns such as Moree, as the State prepared for more rain.

The initial stages of the floods were quite chaotic, comprising a lot of time sensitive tasks.

The call went out to many NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers to assist. Those who responded went above and beyond, working long hours in obviously very wet and uncomfortable conditions. Some even left their homes at potential risk of flooding in order to assist others in need.

The crews assisted State Emergency Services with rescuing numerous residents, they transported people to and from places of work, delivered sandbags and even transported other Emergency Service personnel including Ambulance Services of NSW members to treat and transfer patients. They spent hours sandbagging homes and businesses, escorted stranded vehicles through floodwater and even flew into a town to assist where the levy bank was beginning to breach.

Without the assistance of these willing and committed NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers, the floods would have been a lot more devastating to the residents of Moree and surrounding villages.

*The Moree Rural Fire Brigade and Narrabri Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

*Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.*

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### Bland Temora Zone Volunteers and Staff

Region West

Represented by Superintendent Steve Holden on behalf of Brigades of Bland Temora Zone

During the 2012 flooding that inundated much of NSW, Bland Temora Zone volunteers and staff provided emergency flood assistance to seven out-of-area communities within NSW between 12 February 2012 and 31 March 2012. Unfortunately the out-of-area assistance that was provided occurred at the same time as the Bland Temora Zone was experiencing significant flooding across their own Zone (Local Government Areas).

Bland Temora Zone volunteers and staff provided valuable assistance to the Local Government Areas of Walgett, Lighting Ridge, Bourke, Forbes, Barellan, Yenda & Hay.

This assistance was provided while the Zone was experiencing flooding in Ungarie, Kikoira, Anona, Gubbata, Tallimba, Back Creek, Bland Creek, Morangarell, Clear Ridge, Winnunga, Thullooo, Bolagamy & Barmedman areas. Within the Bland Temora Zone approximately 180km of fencing, 1500 head of stock were lost and 80 houses in the village of Ungarie, Bland Creek and Morangarell areas experienced significant water inundation.

Overall the Bland Temora Zone committed 15 Brigades involving some 45 volunteers and staff to out-of-areas while within the Zone, 15 Brigades and 71 volunteers and staff were committed in assisting local residence.

The resilience of the volunteers in providing valuable assistance to out-of-area communities in desperate times of need at the same time as helping those within their own communities is something the whole community should be extremely proud of. They not only managed to achieve this, but achieved it without requesting assistance from other areas.

There were many volunteers that responded to incidents on more than one occasion and many others would have volunteered if it was possible. Those that couldn't provide volunteer assistance were either isolated by flooding themselves or had their own flooding issues to contend with.

*The Brigades of the Bland Temora Zone are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

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### Gloucester/Great Lakes Team Volunteers and Staff

Region East

Represented by Acting Manager Jim Blackmore on behalf of Volunteer and Staff members of Gloucester/Great Lakes Team, Region East

The members of the Gloucester/Great Lakes Team played a critical role in support of the NSW Police Force operation, Strike Force Dirkin, in their search, apprehension and arrest of fugitive Malcolm Naden (Australia's then most wanted person).

The members received the recognition of the NSW Police Force Commissioner for their dedicated support of the operation. The Commissioner also stated: "Significantly, the provision of the Operations Centre at the Gloucester Rural Fire Service, which became the Forward Command Post and central deployment location for the operation, was of critical assistance."

The level of support afforded to the Police, primarily the way the team embraced the Strike Force members through catering, hospitality, and friendship throughout the covert, complex and protracted operation, has been recognised by the Police Commissioner "as greatly contributing to its success".

While the Gloucester/Great Lakes Team were supported by many Service members from Region and Head Office, the Fire Control Centre remained the focal point of the operation for a number of weeks, during which time the team were able to conduct normal business and continue to provide a service to the local community.

*The volunteers and staff of the Gloucester/Great Lakes Team are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### Hazelbrook Rural Fire Brigade

Blue Mountains, Region East

**Diane Harrison, Hayden Hofland, Ellie Van Megen, Thomas Owen and Ian West**

On 15 April 2012, while waiting to assist the National Parks and Wildlife Service with a hazard reduction in Kedumba, the Crew from the Hazelbrook Rural Fire Brigade came across a motor vehicle hidden down a side track with its motor still running.

On closer inspection, the Crew discovered that there was an unconscious woman inside the vehicle. The occupant of the vehicle had taken an overdose of medication and was also trying to poison herself with carbon monoxide as a form of suicide. Members of the crew ventilated the vehicle by opening all the doors and windows, removed the woman and treated her until she regained consciousness. Once she was in a state of consciousness the Crew provided safe refuge, reassurance, care and compassion until an ambulance arrived. There were indications that a small child may have been in the vehicle and a search in and around the vehicle was conducted until the woman gained enough of her faculties to indicate that she had left the child at home with her husband the night before. The crew provided extensive information to FIRECOM as well as information to the incoming ambulance and also provided critical first aid response.

The Crew of the Hazelbrook Rural Fire Brigade acted in a manner that demonstrated a professional attitude. The response was a model of command and control as well as an excellent illustration of going above and beyond the call of firefighting. The outcome from this was a life saved and a mother and child reunited. If not for the Crew's intervention, there would have most certainly been a more tragic conclusion.

*The Hazelbrook Rural Fire Brigade is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### Lake Albert Bush Fire Brigade

Wagga Wagga, Riverina Zone, Region South

The first weekend in March 2012 saw an extraordinary rain event that led to flash and riverine flooding throughout the Murrumbidgee floodplain. This led to a sustained and significant response from Emergency Service Agencies throughout Southern NSW, with local Rural Fire Service Brigades heavily involved.

Lake Albert Bush Fire Brigade was one of the many Brigades involved that committed many hundreds if not thousands of hours to both the response and recovery phases of the event. This was no different to other Brigades throughout the wider area who volunteered to assist in so many individual situations over many weeks.

What was extraordinary was the 'army' of the Lake Albert Brigade. The members worked tirelessly to provide meals for the RFS crews and to those Local and out-of-zone strike teams who rallied to assist. From the early hours of the morning to late each evening the catering crews continued to prepare hundreds of meals for tired crews whatever the hour.

This was exceptional in a number of areas including the fact that the Lake Albert Brigade had just decided to "dabble" in the catering side just a few months earlier. Crews, whether they were going to work or coming off a job received sit down meals in the Brigade Station. Lunch time meals were also provided to many crew and strike teams travelling to communities well away from Wagga Wagga to assist with recovery efforts.

The "quiet achievers" of Lake Albert Brigade truly deserve to be recognised for their outstanding service and commitment during this time to not only fellow Rural Fire Service members but also the wider community. Their efforts were pivotal in assisting emergency service organisations to provide a response to this prolonged and devastating event.

*The Lake Albert Bush Fire Brigade is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### Macarthur Remote Area FireFighting Team (RAFT) Brigade

Macarthur Zone, Region East

Foundation Members: Glen Bannon, Lee Barnard, Kerry Beattie, Matthew Broadribb, Vaughan Butler, Steve Deweske, Blake Foster, Rance Harrison, Andrew Macdonald, Anthony Mizzi, Robert Pate, Daniel Perriman, John Pisani, Martin Russell, Marten Sweeney, Mark Venter, Mark Williams, Christopher Wright.

In December 2011, the members of the Macarthur Remote Area Firefighting Team (RAFT) held their inaugural meeting after a presentation from the Rural Fire Service on the concept of a RAFT Team. The idea soon took flight with the concept team approved by the Macarthur Senior Management Team, and embraced by the other Brigades of the Macarthur Zone. Commencing with only 18 volunteers, these members undertook the task to promote and sell the idea to the wider volunteer community finally recruiting 21 members. Keen and very active to have the team operational by the opening of the fire season 2011/12, the team undertook an intensive regime of training, testing and medicals becoming qualified in a very short period to meet the challenge of deploying to their first RAFT job and Section 44 as a team on the 27 October 2011, at Cliff Drive Blue Mountains.

Since that initial deployment, the team graduated to a brigade in their very own right in August 2012. Still exceptionally active as a newly formed Brigade, Macarthur RAFT has deployed on five Remote Area Response Team (RART) Stand Ups (Camden, Bulga, Taree), five Section 44 deployments and one local assistance. The dedication and commitment to the cause by the Macarthur RAFT Brigade has made the foundation member's worthy of recognition.

*The Macarthur RAFT Brigade is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### MIA Zone Volunteers and Staff

Region South

Represented by Superintendent Kevin Adams, Group Captain Craig Bardney,  
Group Captain Colin Smeeth

In early March 2012, the MIA Zone experienced a major rainfall and storm event. The flooding which occurred across the Zone resulted in several towns and villages being inundated with localised flood water as well as flooding in the creeks and the Murrumbidgee river system across the Zone. NSW Rural Fire Service volunteer and staff were involved at all levels of the operations in the initial stages of the event from attending numerous calls for assistance in areas where the RFS are the only Emergency Service available, to assisting State Emergency Services (SES).

As the rainfall event subsided the brigade and staff members within the Zone turned their attention to assisting people whose property had been flooded and as the primary agency, cleaning up properties both private and public, so the community could return to normal. The MIA Zone volunteers and staff during this time also assisted the SES and other emergency services in the main towns of Griffith, Yenda, Darling Point, and Narrandera.

The coordination and work undertaken in the villages of Barellan and Yenda was especially significant as the role of cleaning up these villages was left to the local RFS. This required local crews to coordinate and ensure that crews were able to be utilised to assist the community. This showed the professionalism and capacity of the senior volunteers and staff to effectively manage such conditions which at the same time included some staff and volunteers having their own properties being affected by the flooding.

The MIA Zone assisted continuously during the major flood event from on the ground to the Incident Management Team until the event was over.

*The MIA Zone volunteers and staff are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### NSW RFS Courage Under Fire, RFSA Kokoda Trek Initiative

Represented by Chief Superintendent John Parnaby on behalf of Organisers/  
Participants

**Philip Brockett, Jason Conn, Sandra Huer, Tracey McNamara, Ivan Moses, Ben Nolan, John Parnaby, David Patton, Corey Philip, Kevin Poole, Ian Spall, Helen Strasser, Kylee Wade, Michael Webber and Kristian White**

In July 2010, Chief Superintendent John Parnaby sought the Commissioner's support (in principle) to take a small group of adults, children and grandchildren between the ages of 16 and 25 of fallen or seriously injured Firefighters on a journey to trek Kokoda. On 8 April 2012, as a result of tireless efforts of a group of dedicated NSW Rural Fire Service Volunteers and Staff, the inaugural NSW Rural Fire Service Courage Under Fire, Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) Kokoda Trek became a reality.

The initiative would not have been possible without the dedication of the 12 participants and trekkers who participated in the inaugural NSW Rural Fire Service Courage Under Fire, RFSA Kokoda Trek, by committing vast amounts of time.

The Trek was not only a journey of personal discovery, it also expanded opportunities to young participants through leadership and development training, and served to educate those who were unaware of the initiative.

The trek would serve as a potentially life changing experience of courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice – the values and qualities of those Australian Soldiers who fought along the Kokoda Track almost 70 years earlier. These values and qualities are the very same as those demonstrated by our volunteers each and every time they answer the call, in particular those who paid the ultimate price.

Already the team has presented to, or been requested to present, at many functions with much interest in the initiative such as the RFSA State Council, the Biennial Chaplaincy and Family Support Conference, Macarthur Ball, many District Captains meetings and Brigade meetings to name a few.

*The NSW Rural Fire Service Courage Under Fire, RFSA Kokoda Trek Initiative, organisers and participants are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

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### Riverina Zone Volunteers and Staff

Region South

Represented by Superintendent Roger Orr, Group Captain James Smith and Group Captain Graham White

In early March 2012, the Riverina Zone experienced a major rainfall and storm events. The flooding which occurred across the Zone resulted in several towns and villages being inundated with localised flood water as well as flooding in the creeks and the Murrumbidgee river system. NSW Rural Fire Service volunteer and staff members were involved at all levels of the operations in the initial stages of the event from attending numerous calls for assistance in areas where the RFS are the only Emergency Service available, to assisting State Emergency Services (SES) in the city of Wagga Wagga and surrounding towns and villages.

As the rainfall event subsided, the brigades turned their attention to assisting people whose property had been flooded and as the primary agency, cleaning up properties both private and public, so the community could return to normal. The Riverina Zone volunteers and staff during this time also assisted the State Emergency Services and other emergency services in the main towns of Wagga Wagga undertaking door knocking, sandbagging and providing assistance to stranded residents.

The Riverina Zone assisted continuously during the major flood event from on the ground to the Incident Management Team until the event was over.

*The Riverina Zone volunteers and staff are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

## ST FLORIAN'S FEAST DAY, THE FOURTH OF MAY

Firefighters in most European countries celebrate 4 May as St Florian's Feast Day as well as International Firefighters Day. This has been a tradition in central Europe for more than 150 years.

Born about 250 AD in Cetium (now in Austria), Florian joined the Roman army and angered the Emperor Diocletian when he refused to persecute Christians in the area. Florian gave himself up to the soldiers of Aquilinus, the governor, when they were rounding up the Christians. He was twice scourged, half-flayed alive and sentenced to be burnt alive. While being set on fire he challenged the Roman soldiers to light the fire, saying "If you do, I will climb to heaven on the flames". As the soldiers were apprehensive, they took another path and threw Florian into the River Enns with a stone around his neck.

About 600 years later, in approximately 900-950 AD a monastery was built near Florian's tomb, and subsequently the village of St Florian grew around it. St Florian was adopted as the Patron Saint of Poland, following an incident when a person was saved from a fire by invoking St Florian's name. Since then, St Florian has been invoked against fire and has been generally regarded in most countries as the Patron Saint of Firefighters.

Florian is associated with brewer's because of a legendary incident in which he miraculously stopped a fire with a single pitcher of water. He is often depicted holding a pitcher of water.

Many miracles of healing are attributed to his intercession and he is invoked as a powerful protector in danger from fire.

