

NSW Rural Fire Service
The Award of the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM)
Honours and Awards Queen's Birthday 2010
NOMINATION STATEMENTS

Dr. Kenneth Charles Hughes

Ken joined the Service in 1979 during the disastrous fires occurring in the Warringah area at that time. In what started as an unselfish act to help his mates Mr Hughes has now sustained a 31 year commitment to the Community and to the NSW Rural Fire Service.

During Ken's 31 year involvement he has attended numerous fires and incidents both within and outside the District. Whilst holding numerous fire fighting qualifications, Ken has also taken on the added responsibilities of the Brigade President and Treasurer of the Coal and Candle Rural Fire Brigade.

Ken was appointed in 2002 as Treasurer of Donated Funds, a position he still holds. This fund seeks, manages and is responsible for both solicited and unsolicited donations to the volunteers of the district. During this tenure Ken has been directly responsible for raising over \$320,000 for the Volunteers of the Rural Fire Service.

As Ken has a keen interest in the development of youth, he regularly participates in local school visits. His insight into the safety and welfare of children led to an innovative approach to these visits, resulting in the design of fire vehicles and a set of steps that enable children to easily and safely climb in and out. This was an immediate hit with other brigades and Ken quickly arranged the funding and manufacture of more steps to be used throughout the District.

Ken has made an extraordinary contribution to the community and in particular to the ongoing development and improvement of the NSW Rural Fire Service. Ken is most deserving of the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Barry Hector Carr

Barry Carr commenced his "life" dedication to the NSW Rural Fire Service in 1953 by joining the, then Kerrs Creek Bush Fire Brigade working as a member of that brigade doing what he could to fight fires with limited and very basic equipment.

Mr Carr was eventually elected Captain of the Kerrs Creek Brigade and later was also elected and appointed as a Group Captain for the northern area of the Cabonne District, a role he still maintains today.

The Mullion creek area north of Orange is a significantly timbered landscape with native and commercial pine forest covering hundreds of square kilometres, over the years, lifestyle residents have migrated to live amongst this idyllic landscape without a full knowledge of the fire danger faced. Mr

Carr has dedicated his adult life to ensuring bush fire mitigation works are carried out through both mechanical means and the implementation of Hazard Reduction Burning.

Mr Carr has gone beyond his call to duty by utilised his own earthmoving machinery and time to, construct and maintain fire trails through the Caluela and Mullions Range Forest areas to ensure community safety from fire. His undying commitment has always been critically supported by his wife and family who are all members of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Mr Carr has been a long time member of the Cabonne & Canobolas Zone Bush Fire Management Committees where his views and passion for bush fire mitigation has been infectious among other members over his many years of service.

This activity is in parallel to his long standing membership on the Canobolas Zone Senior Management Team and the Canobolas Zone Liaison Committee. Barry is most deserving of the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Kevin Cooper

Kevin Cooper joined Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade (Macarthur Zone) as a volunteer in February 1987. With his early demonstrated leadership qualities and the esteem with which he is held by his peers, he soon held the position of Captain for a number of years and the position of President as well. Kevin is recognised as someone who is committed to the Brigade in its training programs, operations and leadership which has underpinned the professionalism that he delivers through his experience drawn from not only his career but through life experiences as well.

Kevin Cooper through his dedication to the NSW Rural Fire Service and Emergency Management has seen active involvement in such notable operations as the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Kevin annually applies his skills and knowledge in the field of Emergency Management with heavy involvement in Incident Management Teams (IMT) for Section 44 Bushfire Emergency Declarations. An example of his dedication was in 2009, Kevin dedicated in excess of four weeks of Volunteer time away from his family and other commitments to be involved with IMT operations. Kevin Cooper is not your average Group Officer within the NSW Rural Fire Service, It is his ability to appreciate a situation, undertake risk assessment, gain situational awareness and execute sound plans from both applied and acquired knowledge. Locally within the Macarthur Zone, particularly those Brigades located within Campbelltown, Kevin in his capacity of Group Officer ensures open communication, and effective volunteer representation in Senior Management Decisions and is always there to assist local volunteers with ongoing issues as a trusting advocate.

On a strategic level as Captain and more recently as Group Officer, Kevin has become actively involved in the strategic development of the Rural Fire Service in South West Sydney, playing an active role in the Zoning of Campbelltown, Camden and Liverpool Rural Fire Districts. Kevin to this day continues to ensure the benefits of Zoning have a positive effect on the Volunteers he represents.

Group Officer Cooper's dedication, leadership, and selfless devotion to duty and passion for the Service over many years as a volunteer makes him deserving of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Ken Neville

Ken Neville has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since joining the local Forbes brigade Ooma-North in 1977. Ken then joined the Forbes Shire Council as the weeds inspector, becoming the part-time Fire Control Officer in February 1986. Ken was one of the first part-time FCO's in the then Central Region, most being honorary.

Ken became full-time in the position and convinced the Forbes Shire Council to employ another part-time Deputy Fire Control Officer because of the increased workload.

In 2001, when the District Staff transferred over to employment by the State Government, Ken was appointed Team Manager for the Mid Lachlan Valley Team, comprising the Local Government areas of Forbes, Parkes, Weddin and Lachlan, with a staff of five.

Ken has always been passionate about the rural volunteers, especially with regard to their needs and wants. He is also willing to put forward eloquent and forceful views of the rural volunteers. He has been a very strong supporter and advocate of the modern day fire-fighting tanker. Ken was one of the first to convince the volunteers and councils that these modern, fast and reliable tankers were a lot better for fire protection than a 1960's vehicle of questionable safety standards. Ken designed tankers for the Forbes area that proved ideal for the grasslands areas and these were the concept for what the NSW Rural Fire Service now describes as the "grasslands" model of the current tanker configuration. In fact, around 2003 the fleet at Forbes had an average of around 7 years of age. Ken also showed passion for tankers by developing and running the tanker event at the Annual Local, Regional and State Championships, something that bought him and the Service great credit as it showed the capabilities of these appliances to a much wider audience.

Ken has represented the western parts of the state on many committees, forums and groups, always participating with the passion, dedication and forthrightness that he knows best. His peers look to Ken for leadership, support, guidance and direction, which he is happy to provide. Ken has achieved much in his tenure as a Fire Control Officer, bringing together the four discreet volunteer groups of Weddin, Parkes, Lachlan and Forbes into a cohesive, functioning and progressive, NSW Rural Fire Service that has high standards in terms of training, operations, community engagement and most importantly volunteer support and advocacy.

Ken has proven his dedication, commitment, leadership, achievement for the promotion of the NSW Rural Fire Service in the western parts of the State deserves all the recognition that this distinguished service is able to provide. Ken is most deserving of the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Geoffrey Colin Thiessen

Group Captain Thiessen has been actively involved in the NSW Rural Fire Service since joining the Yerrinbool Brigade in the Wingecarribee District in 1963. He held the position of Deputy Captain for ten years and was Brigade Captain for over 19 years. He is currently the Brigade President, a position he has held for the past 14 years.

He was appointed a Group Captain in 1998 and has provided outstanding leadership qualities in the Wingecarribee District. He has mentored Deputy Group Captains enabling them to experience both his local knowledge and vast fire fighting experience.

He was a Divisional Commander during several major incidents including the South Beloon, Burke River and Joadja bush fires. He also played a significant role in the Incident Management Team during the Willow Vale bush fire which impacted numerous homes and his contribution was instrumental in the reduction of property loss.

In his capacity as a Group Captain, he has been a delegate on both the Local Bush Fire Management Committee and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. He has led several out of area task forces and he regularly assists in the planning and implementation of hazard reduction works.

He has worked tirelessly with the Yerrinbool Rural Fire Brigade with the building of the new brigade station and has also assisted with the preparation of several grant applications the brigade has submitted to secure additional funds for the station project. He has also assisted with the After Hours Duty Roster for the past eight years as well as being a volunteer delegate on the District Bush Fire Management Committee.

He has been tireless in his dedication to the NSW Rural Fire Service for over 45 years. His many years of distinguished service make him a most worthy candidate for the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Ian Charles Bartholomew

Inspector Ian Bartholomew has provided forty-one years of dedicated service to the NSW Rural Fire Service as both a volunteer and salaried staff member. His dedication has been instrumental in the advancement of the Service in the Gosford District and across the broader NSW Rural Fire Service. The leadership and mentoring by Inspector Bartholomew has seen development of both human and physical resources within the Service. Many currently serving officers owe their early development in the Service to him.

He first joined the Brisbane Waters National Park Bushfire Brigade in 1968 at the age of 16 and very soon after joined the Pearl Beach Rural Fire Brigade of which he was made a Life Member in 1980. He was elected Captain of the Brigade at the age of 18 making him one of the youngest Captains in the Service at that time. Becoming a Group Captain in 1979 he applied his energies to the advancement of the local area including the establishment of local field days, participation in the Training Committee and an ongoing commitment to dealing with incidents. His commitment to providing leadership and coordination during incidents has at many times impacted upon his personal and work life significantly.

In 1998 he was appointed Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Gosford District. This position has now evolved into the Operations Officer and in this position he continues to provide the leadership, coordination and commitment he was known for as a volunteer officer. The abilities and experience he possesses continue to inspire other members of the Service.

He has played crucial roles in the combating of many significant bush fire events including the 1968, 1994, 2001/2002 bush fires which all impacted New South Wales. Further to his involvement in large scale incidents, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to the safety of fire-fighters and the community in dealing with the multitude of emergency calls in and around the Gosford Rural Fire District.

Inspector Bartholomew has always been committed to the delivery of appropriate fire-fighting appliances and during his tenure as Brigade Captain, he was instrumental in upgrading appliances with the Brigade including in 1976 securing a Bedford MFR to replace an aging Blitz. In the late 1970s, he led the way in petitioning Council to upgrade the fleet within the Gosford area, a theme which he continues with to this day with his strong commitment to his quality, well maintained and safe fire-fighting equipment. He has also participated in the NSW Rural Fire Service Technical Committee for many years and has provided insight and input into this committee which has allowed the service to advance its equipment levels.

He continues to provide committed leadership to the NSW Rural Fire Service and his dedication to his role; the Service and the community make him deserving of the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal.
