



**David Elliott**  
Minister for Corrections  
Minister for Emergency Services  
Minister for Veterans Affairs

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FIREFIGHTERS HONOURED FOR BRAVERY AND SERVICE**

A volunteer firefighter who saved his family from a house fire and a student on his way to a HSC exam who stopped to give first aid to an elderly woman are among NSW Rural Fire Service members honoured for outstanding service today.

Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott paid tribute to the nine NSW RFS members and ten units at a bravery and service awards ceremony in Sydney to mark St Florian's day – the Patron Saint of Firefighters.

Among those recognised is Nelligen Rural Fire Brigade Deputy Captain Derek Colebrook, who smashed the windows of his smoke-filled house to rescue his wife and two small children from fire in January 2014.

Pacific Palms Rural Fire Brigade firefighter Brendon Lewis rendered first aid to an elderly woman after he witnessed a car crash while driving to his trial HSC exam in August 2015.

"Mr Colebrook's quick thinking and training undoubtedly helped avoid tragedy and Brendon demonstrated unwavering professionalism and selflessness at a time when he was under intense personal pressure," Mr Elliott said.

"Thankfully, Brendon went on to complete his exam and I consider both men to be shining examples of the calibre of our volunteer firefighters."

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons also praised a number of members recognised for their important work behind the scenes.

"The Kenthurst FireWise Resident Awareness Program is an outstanding example of local volunteer brigades being absolutely committed to making a difference and improving bushfire awareness," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"Delivering education programs within the community is key to ensuring that residents are informed, resilient and properly prepared and more than 500 participants have completed this program to date.

Mr Elliott and Commissioner Fitzsimmons thanked all award recipients and their families for their ongoing support.

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