



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

MEDIA RELEASE

Far South Coast firefighters honoured for service during 2019-20 fire season

18 December 2021

Two years on after fires tore through the South Coast, members of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Far South Coast District have been awarded the National Emergency Medal for their efforts during the 2019-20 fire season.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Peter McKechnie and Far South Coast District Manager Superintendent Angus Barnes presented the medals to 110 volunteers from numerous brigades across the Far South Coast in three ceremonies at Merimbula, Moruya and Batemans Bay between Thursday 16 December and Saturday 18 December 2021.

It followed a multi-agency ceremony in Eden on Thursday, where His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott, and NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers presented the National Emergency Medal to emergency services personnel, including NSW RFS volunteers.

The medal is awarded to those whose service must be in the protection of lives and property or in the service of interests that are not their own and who supported the emergency response for a minimum of five days between September 2019 and February 2020.

Several significant fires took hold of the South Coast region, including the Currowan, Border, Badja Forest, Werri Berri and Clyde Mountain fires.

Sadly, 26 lives were lost in the 2019-20 fires, including four NSW RFS members and three US aviation crew performing water-bombing duties.

Across the state, more than 2,400 homes were destroyed with a further 1,013 homes damaged. The majority of these property losses were sustained in southern NSW and the agricultural community in the region suffered significant loss of livestock and crops.

Deputy Commissioner McKechnie commended each medal recipient for their dedication to protect the community.

“Every single one of these members should be proud of themselves – they all rose to the challenge admirably and continued to fight despite the heavy physical and emotional toll,” Deputy Commissioner McKechnie said.

“The losses weigh heavily on all of us. That does not, however, take away from the fact that those losses would have been so much greater were it not for the work of our firefighters.”

For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on 9898 1855
For current incidents or major fire updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Superintendent Barnes said the Far South Coast NSW RFS members were worthy recipients of the National Emergency Medal.

“Our firefighters went above and beyond to protect their communities when fires were closing in across the region,” Superintendent Barnes said.

“The 2019-20 fire season was intense, lengthy and like nothing we had ever seen before. Every single member being honoured should be very proud of their efforts because the community certainly is.”



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