

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Top honours for NSW RFS Botswana Fire Management Program

29 August 2012

Two members of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) have been presented with a prestigious award in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the emergency services.

The NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said the Laurie Lavelle Award has been awarded to NSW RFS Group Manager Russell Taylor AFSM and Superintendent Brian Graham AFSM at the annual Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and Bush Fire Cooperative Research Centre Conference.

“Mr Taylor and Superintendent Graham have received this award for their exceptional contribution to the Botswana Fire Management Program.

“The Botswana Program, funded by AusAid, began three years ago when the Government of the Republic of Botswana approached the NSW RFS to help them manage bush fires in their country.

“Based on the unique and highly successful model of the NSW RFS, the Program has successfully trained fire fighters, identified suitable firefighting equipment and established a co-ordinated firefighting model in bush fire prone Botswana.

“More than 70 members of the NSW RFS have been deployed to Botswana since the Program began, including more than 45 volunteers.

“In recognition of the exceptional success of the Program the Botswana Minister for Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, the Honourable Kitso Mokaila will travel to Australia to visit the NSW RFS in September 2012.

“Following Mr Mokaila’s visit, firefighters from Botswana plan to visit NSW during the next two years to learn about the benefits of aerial fire fighting and hazard reduction and to witness one of the biggest volunteer firefighting forces in the world in action.

“The NSW RFS is internationally recognised as a world leader in fire management and this Program represents the depth of knowledge and expertise the Service has in mitigating and fighting bush fires.

“The NSW RFS is committed to sharing its considerable experience in fighting bush fires with nations that do not have the benefit of advanced fire prevention, fighting and management systems such as ours.

“I would like to congratulate Mr Taylor and Superintendent Graham for their exceptional contribution to this Program and for further raising the public profile of the NSW RFS and particularly the work of our volunteers on the international stage,” said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

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