

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Sutherland's volunteers applauded

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A group of committed volunteers were the subject of NSW RFS Assistant Commissioner Dominic Lane's praise in an official medal ceremony held in their honour.

Assistant Commissioner Lane said that Long Service Medal recipients are great representatives of the values at the very core of the Service; courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice.

"The twenty three long-standing volunteers being awarded with medals today have amassed almost 500 years of experience between them. They are a highly skilled, professional group of volunteers that are an asset to both the Sutherland shire and the Service," said Assistant Commissioner Lane.

"Not only do these volunteers have excellent bush and grass firefighting skills but they also frequently attend car accidents and house fires as well as administering first aid.

"More recently members have been deployed to help the SES with flood recovery in other parts of NSW. This work highlighted the diversity of members' skills and their willingness to help people when they need it most, wherever they live.

"On behalf of the Service I would like to particularly thank the six members who are receiving medals for more than 30 years of service to their communities today.

"John Wood from the Illawong Bush Fire Brigade has been a member since 1966 during which time he successfully ran a district wide training programme before moving into the position of Sutherland District Manager. John was also awarded with a prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal in 2007.

"The Sutherland Shire has benefitted from more than 55 years of NSW RFS protection. It's location on the southern coastal border of Sydney, and the high volume of bush in the area, means fires in the Shire are often high profile.

"Many of these medal recipients remember all too well how devastating large scale bush fires can be from their involvement in the last major fires in the area in the early 2000's.

"Although we have recently experienced unseasonably quiet bush fire seasons, this year we are seeing much higher than average grass growth as a result of the prolonged heavy rainfall.

"Looking ahead to the next fire season the community is relying on these experienced firefighters' valuable local knowledge and it is important they know their commitment and dedication is deeply appreciated," concluded Assistant Commissioner Lane.

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