



Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 6 March 2013

HONOURING THE HIDDEN SUPPORT

Employers are a vital part of the volunteer firefighting effort in NSW and today Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher launched a program to recognise their contribution at the Wentworthville Leagues Club in Western Sydney.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Supportive Employer Program highlights the important contribution employers make by releasing volunteers to prevent and fight bush fires.

Recently a NSW RFS volunteer employed by the Wentworthville Leagues Club spent a week fighting the ferocious bush fires in Coonabarabran. His deployment inspired the Club to introduce one week's paid emergency services leave for all staff.

Minister Gallacher said employers who actively encourage employees to volunteer are leading by example through investing in both their own people and the local community.

"A key focus of this Program is the inaugural Special Commendation award. We are asking volunteers to nominate their employer if they have been particularly supportive of their volunteering commitments.

"Twelve NSW businesses that have made an extraordinary contribution to their community by releasing NSW RFS volunteers, will receive Special Commendations," said Minister Gallacher.

Minister Gallacher said the program recognises the contribution of all volunteers, not just frontline firefighters.

"Volunteers perform a range of roles that are all of equal importance to the firefighting effort, including radio operators, catering, logistics, planning and aviation support.

"While the time and effort that volunteers put in is clearly visible, this couldn't happen without supportive employers behind the scenes.

"We have seen more than 6,240 fires in NSW this bush fire season and without the overwhelming support from employers who allow their staff to fight these fires, there is no doubt more homes would have been destroyed.

"Put simply, without the support of employers NSW RFS firefighters cannot perform their roles," Minister Gallacher said.

Minister Gallacher urged volunteers to nominate supportive employers of all types and sizes; including small to large businesses, local and state government, large companies and self-employed volunteers.

Recipients of a NSW RFS Supportive Employer Program Special Commendation will be profiled in local media, on NSW RFS social media channels and www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.

Nominations close 30 April.

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