



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Illawarra District volunteers honoured

**9 May 2018**

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) today honoured Illawarra District volunteers for their long-standing dedication and commitment to protecting the community.

Member for Kiama Gareth Ward MP and NSW RFS Assistant Commissioner Rebel Talbert presented 13 National Medals and 23 Long Service Medals to 33 recipients in recognition of their extraordinary achievements and combined 740 years of service.

“The hard work and professionalism of these and indeed all NSW RFS members does not go unnoticed and, while they do not ask for praise, we gladly award these medals as a proud acknowledgement of their contribution and commitment,” Mr Ward said.

“The Illawarra District is afforded a world-class level of fire protection due to the experience and dedication of our 22 Rural Fire Brigades and we cannot thank them enough.”

Assistant Commissioner Talbert said 20 of the 33 medal recipients have dedicated more than 20 years to the Service and the community.

“Every member is worthy of the highest praise, however I would like to make particular mention of Will Lee, who is today being awarded the National Medal 3<sup>rd</sup> Clasp and John Oakley, who is receiving the Long Service Medal 3<sup>rd</sup> Clasp,” Assistant Commissioner Talbert said.

“Will joined the Austinmer Brigade 48 years ago, has served as Captain and Group Officer and attended numerous local and out of area incidents while still finding time to help fundraising efforts, train fellow members and renovate the station and refurbish vehicles.

“John has dedicated 41 years to the Farmborough Heights Brigade, fulfilling the roles of Deputy Group Captain, Captain, Senior Deputy Captain and Deputy Captain, while also training and mentoring fellow Brigade members.”

Assistant Commissioner Talbert also congratulated National Medal recipients Gerard Blunden, Brian Sharman, Andrew Flanagan, Joanne Grant, Peter Parsons, William McParland, Ross Barlow, Greg Ball, Andrew Sweeney, Greg Wardle, Simon O’Connor and Belinda Lee.

“It is an absolute honor to present these awards and to take a moment to reflect upon the outstanding achievements of all of these members,” Assistant Commissioner Talbert said.

For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on (02) 9898 1855.  
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