

Jihad Dib

Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Youth Justice



Media Release

The bravery and selfless service of our firefighters is being recognised on St. Florian's Day

Thursday, 4 May 2023

Almost 80 RFS volunteers, staff and teams have been recognised today for their bravery and unwavering commitment in emergencies, including bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister for Emergency Services, Jihad Dib joined RFS Commissioner, Rob Rogers, at the RFS State Training Academy in Dubbo where the award ceremony took place this morning.

Operational Officer Philip Blackmore was awarded the highest NSW RFS commendation, the Commissioner's Award for Valour, for his actions when a car explosion, caused by an acetylene cylinder, rocked the township of Gwandalan on Father's Day 2020.

Assisted by an off-duty paramedic, Officer Blackmore rushed to assist the injured people and began resuscitation on a man found lying beside the vehicle with significant burns and injuries, putting himself in danger to try to save the life of someone else.

Officer Blackmore's fellow Gwandalan Brigade members, alongside members of the Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade, received a Commissioner's Citation for Service (Unit) for their courageous response to this major incident.

The RFS Aviation Rescue crews were also recognised today for their work in recent flood emergencies, including more than 180 rescues to save people trapped by rising floodwaters since February 2022.

One incident on 14 November 2022 saw Aviation Rescue Crew members confronted by complex and challenging conditions to undertake 67 rescues by helicopter in the township of Eugowra, which is the largest number of successive rescues performed by rescue aircraft on any single day in Australian history.

Held on the fourth of May each year, the award ceremony coincides with the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters and International Firefighters' Day.

It's a day to give thanks and recognise those across the entire RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW organisations who put their own lives at risk, to protect others and keep their communities safe.

Minister for Emergency Services, Jihad Dib said:

"Today we say thank you to the volunteers and staff of both the RFS and FRNSW who selflessly respond to all manner of fire and emergencies, often leaving their own families behind to help others."

"I am incredibly proud of the people who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to protecting NSW communities in times of crisis."

RFS Commissioner, Rob Rogers said:

“Every single one of these members should be proud of their commitment to protecting communities across the state.”

FRNSW Commissioner Paul Baxter said:

“Our firefighters don’t do their jobs for the accolades or praise, but it’s important we acknowledge when they’ve gone above and beyond in their duties.”

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