



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW volunteer fire fighters recognised on St Florian's Day

4 May 2021

Hundreds of volunteer fire fighters from across NSW have been recognised with prestigious awards from the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) as part the Service's annual commendations for exceptional service and bravery.

Police and Emergency Services Minister David Elliott joined NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers and Resilience NSW Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons today (4 May 2021) to honour 16 individual award recipients and one brigade for their heroic actions during the 2019/2020 Black Summer bush fires. All other commendations will be issued at regional ceremonies to be held in coming weeks.

Usually 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.

Minister David Elliott said the event was an opportunity to come together to officially thank NSW RFS volunteers for their ongoing hard work and professionalism.

"We are enormously grateful for these men and women who selflessly serve our communities and respond to all types of fires and emergencies around the clock. We pay tribute to those brave members and their dedication to protect the irreplaceable," Mr Elliott said.

Commissioner Rogers said this year's recipients demonstrated extreme acts of bravery in the face of horrific conditions experienced during the 2019/2020 Black Summer bush fires, and includes recipients for 2020 who were unable to receive their commendation due to Covid restrictions last year.

"During a bush fire season like no other, our members fought tirelessly for months to save lives and property. Tragically, four NSW RFS members were killed in action during this terrible season and we have posthumously awarded Andrew O'Dwyer and Geoffrey Keaton from Horsely Park Brigade, Samuel McPaul from Morven Brigade and Colin Burns from Belowra Brigade with individual Commissioner's Commendations for Bravery.

"Their sacrifice will never be forgotten," Commissioner Rogers said. "Several other members have received bravery commendations for fighting the Green Valley fire of December 2019 when a fire tornado erupted. Captain Stuart Anderson and firefighter Andrew Julian of Back Creek-Greater Hume Brigade, Deputy Group Captain Ian Avage of Splitters Creek Brigade, Captain Andrew Godde and firefighter Rodney O'Keeffe of Culcairn North West Brigade risked their lives and sustained serious injuries while protecting members of the community and their homes."

A Commissioner's Unit Citation for Bravery was awarded to Harrington Brigade which was attending a house fire at Johns River in November 2019 when a burning tree fell across their path forcing them to continue on foot in extreme fire conditions.

"Displaying courage and determination, all these members personify what it means to be a NSW Rural Fire Service volunteer," Commissioner Rogers said.

For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on 9898 1855
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Commissioner Rogers also announced that all NSW RFS Members who played a role in the 2019/2020 Black Summer bush fires will receive a Commissioner's Certificate for Service, for their contribution to protecting people and property during one of the most devastating fire seasons in history.

NSW RFS Internal Bravery and Service Awards 2021:

Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery (Individual)

- Captain Stuart Anderson, Back Creek-Greater Hume Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Group Captain Ian Avage, Splitters Creek Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Senior Deputy Captain Nathan Barnden, Jellat Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Firefighter Colin Burns, Belowra Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern *
- Deputy Group Captain Scott Campbell, Lawrence Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Firefighter Ryan Clarkstone, Wilton Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Firefighter John Gallagher, Tathra Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Captain Andrew Godde, Culcairn North West Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Firefighter Andrew Julian, Back Creek-Greater Hume Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Deputy Captain Geoffrey Keaton, Horsley Park Brigade, Cumberland, Area Greater Sydney *
- Firefighter Andrew O'Dwyer, Horsley Park Brigade, Cumberland, Area Greater Sydney *
- Firefighter Rodney O'Keeffe, Culcairn North West Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Firefighter Samuel McPaul, Morven Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western *
- Captain William Ross, Spencer Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter
- Firefighter Dean Symons, Illawong Brigade, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Deputy Captain Alison Wade, Spencer Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter

** Also recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service*

Commissioner's Unit Citation for Bravery

- Harrington Brigade, Mid Coast, Area Hunter

NOTE: Award recipients listed above received their commendation at today's ceremony. All remaining recipients below will be presented with their awards at six regional ceremonies to be held in coming weeks to adhere to COVID safety guidelines.

Commissioner's Commendation for Service (Individual)

- Inspector Angus Barnes, Surf Beach Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Deputy Group Captain Peter Bavington Captains Flat Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
- Group Captain Grahame Chevalley, Gresford Brigade, Lower Hunter, Area Hunter
- Firefighter John Downes, Jamberoo Brigade, Illawarra, Area Greater Sydney
- Senior Deputy Captain Jennifer Farrell, Matcham/Holgate Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter
- Group Captain Glen Howe, Kariong Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter
- Firefighter Melody Lovelace, Manyana Brigade, Shoalhaven, Area South Eastern



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- Captain Albert Maras, Jingellic Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
 - Deputy Captain Kyle McCrea, Mittagong Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
 - Deputy Captain Ted Millsteed, March Brigade, Canobolas Zone, Area Western
 - Captain Peter O'Connell, Krawarree Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
 - Senior Deputy Captain John Ralston, Bendolba-Salisbury Brigade, Lower Hunter, Area Hunter
 - Captain Gregory Speed, Orchard Hills Brigade, Cumberland, Area Greater Sydney * #
 - Deputy Captain Warwick Teasdale, Killcare / Wagstaff Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter *
 - Senior Deputy Captain Barry Whalan, Eulomogo Brigade, Orana, Area Western
- * Note: These citations were published on the NSW RFS website in 2020. Due to COVID restrictions, medals and certificates were presented today.*

Note: Gregory Speed was awarded his Commendation for Service on 16 October 2020 by Commissioner Rogers.

Commissioner's Certificate for Commendation (Individual)

- Captain James Barron, Peak View Brigade, Monaro, Area South Eastern
- Brigade Callout Officer Julie Barron, Peak View Brigade, Monaro, Area South Eastern
- Captain Paul Bott, Mongarlowe Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
- Senior Deputy Captain Jonathan Bracht, Robertson Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Communications Officer Tania Burger, Hastings Communication Brigade, Mid Coast, Area Hunter
- Senior Deputy Captain Rosemary Byers, Ashley Brigade, Namoi Gwydir, Area North Western
- Senior Deputy Captain Harold, Gibson Trenayr Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Senior Deputy Captain Todd Gibson, Heathcote Headquarters, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Group Captain John Hawkins, Lankeys Creek Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Deputy Group Captain Peter Taylor, Lankeys Creek Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Group Captain Barry Henry, Walgett Headquarters, North West, Area North Western
- Group Captain Matthew Hicks, Jindera Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Firefighter Bernadette Dawson, Regentville Brigade, Cumberland, Area Greater Sydney
- Deputy Captain Evan Delaforce, Tucabia Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Group Captain Stuart Dick, Bingara Brigade, Namoi Gwydir, Area North Western
- Deputy Captain Elizabeth Ellis, Burrawang Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Senior Deputy Captain Lesley Wood, Mandemar-Wingecarribee Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Senior Deputy Captain Lindsey Flynn, Bundeena Brigade, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Mr Jonathan Gauci, Community Resilience, Operations, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Firefighter Malcolm Irons, Central – Greater Hume Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Deputy Captain Wayne Watson, Central – Greater Hume Brigade, Southern Border, Area South Western
- Captain Gerard James, Bunnaloo Brigade, Mid Murray, Area South Western
- Captain Andrew Jones, Laguna Brigade, Lower Hunter, Area Hunter
- Deputy Captain Brett Martin, Narara Brigade, Central Coast, Area Hunter
- Senior Deputy Captain Gordon Meiklejohn, Wollondilly Support Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney



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- Ms Jane Hollier, Deputy Commissioner's Office, Operations, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Captain Nicholas Hornbuckle, Queanbeyan City Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
- Group Captain David Tucker, Bonalbo Brigade, Northern Rivers, Area North Eastern
- Deputy Captain Robin Tuckfield, Menai Brigade, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Deputy Captain Victor (Paul) Vaughan, Eulomogo Brigade, Orana, Area Western
- Captain Timothy Reynolds, Araluen Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
- Captain Michael Rogan, Grafton City Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Deputy Captain Peter Thomas, Wollondilly Support Brigade/Oakdale Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Senior Deputy Captain Loryn Mendham, Hastings Communication Brigade, Mid Coast, Area Hunter
- Captain Trevor Muddle, Mittagong Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Senior Deputy Captain Walter, Murray Mount Ramornie Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Captain Justin Parr, Nerriga Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern

Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service

- Arcadia Brigade, Hornsby / Ku-Ring-Gai, Area Greater Sydney
- Aviation Rescue Crew and Operations Support, Operations Support, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Bawley Point Brigade, Shoalhaven, Area South Eastern
- Mr Daniel Busch & Mr Simon Curry, Operations & Mitigation Services, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Cherrybrook Brigade, Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai, Area Greater Sydney
- Cumberland Strike Team Bravo, Cumberland, Area Greater Sydney
- Far North Coast Strike Team, Far North Coast, Area North Eastern
- Gulmarrad Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Kings Plains Brigade, Canobolas Zone, Area Western

Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit)

- Araluen Brigade, Lake George, Area South Eastern
- Bemboka Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Bush Fire Building Impact Assessment Team, NSW RFS Headquarters, Planning and Environment Services, NSW RFS Districts, Volunteers
- Chaplains, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Crescent Head Brigade, Lower North Coast, Area North Eastern *
- Critical Incident Support Services, (Peer Support Team) NSW RFS Headquarters
- Clarence Valley Fire Control Centre Group Captain - Group 1, Coaldale Brigade, Trenayr Brigade and Copmanhurst Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Country Fire Authority Strike Team 1304, Victoria
- Eurobodalla Volunteer Operation Support Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Ewingar Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Far North Coast Brigades, Far North Coast, Area North Eastern
- Far North Coast SMT, Far North Coast, Area North Eastern *
- Field Services Team, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), NSW RFS Headquarters
- Grays Point 1B, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney



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- Goodooga Brigade, Far West, Area Western *
- Interstate Liaison Unit, State Operations, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Laguna Brigade, Lower Hunter, Area Hunter
- Loftus 1 Bravo Crew, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Lower North Coast Zone Brigades, Group Captains and Staff, Lower North Coast, Area North Eastern
- Malua Bay Brigade, Far South Coast, Area South Eastern
- Mellong Fire Strike Team Hawkesbury, Area Greater Sydney
- Murrumbateman Brigade, Southern Tablelands Zone, Area South Eastern
- Northern Rivers Brigades - Busbys Flat/Rappville Fires, Northern Rivers Zone, Area North Eastern
- Northern Rivers Brigades - Kyogle Northern Rivers, Area North Eastern
- Operational Resources and Transport Team, Operational and Mitigation Services, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Predictive Services, Community Resilience, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Public Information Unit, Communications and Engagement, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Region South Strike Team, Riverina Zone, Area South Western
- Silverdale Brigade, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Deputy Captain Arron Deegan and Deputy Captain Lucy Brearley, Southern Highlands, Area Greater Sydney
- Southern Tablelands Zone Strike Team Echo 1, Southern Tablelands, Area South Eastern *
- South West Slopes Zone SMT, South West Slopes, Area Western *
- State Logistics Unit, State Operations, NSW RFS Headquarters
- Sutherland Strike Team Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney
- Tyringham Brigade, Clarence Valley, Area North Eastern
- Winmalee Walking Party, Blue Mountains, Area Greater Sydney
- Woronora Brigade, Sutherland, Area Greater Sydney

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