



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Coffs Coast RFS Brigades celebrate 75 years, new fire trucks and medals

**29 September 2023**

RFS members of the Coffs Coast District have a great deal to celebrate this week.

RFS Chief Superintendent Michael Brett will join Coffs Coast District Manager Inspector Sandra Huer at a special event tomorrow to present medals, officially handover a brand new fire tanker, celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Brigades as well as acknowledge two much-loved senior leaders of the District who embark upon their retirement.

RFS Chief Superintendent Michael Brett said there are five Brigades each celebrating 75 years' service to their communities.

"The Gleniffer, Hydes Creek, Valery, North Bellingen and Kalang brigades have a great deal to be proud of, having served their community with professionalism for decades and this event is an opportunity to say thank you to the Brigade members, past and present," he said.

"I am also honoured to join Inspector Huer to present 81 Long Service Medals, seven National Medals as one Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal and British Columbia II Clasp Medal to members who have given more than 2,000 years' service to their local community, and to communities abroad.

Chief Superintendent Brett extended a special mention of Thomas O'Connor of the Brierfield Brigade, who will be celebrated for an impressive 66 years' service with the presentation of his Long Service Medal, 5<sup>th</sup> clasp and National Medal, 4<sup>th</sup> clasp.

"Thomas has held the roles of President, Captain and Group Captain for the Coffs Coast District and is widely known for his knowledge of fire, his knack of teaching others and for being a true gentleman.

Inspector Huer said the Bonville Brigade members are excited to officially receive the keys to their brand new category 1 fire tanker, valued at \$395,000.

"Bonville Brigade of 55 members are actively engaged in their local community, responding to incidents locally and often providing assistance out of area, so this state-of-the-art tanker will be put to good use.

Inspector Huer also made mention of the two District Group Captains celebrating their retirement from operations and thanked them for their invaluable dedication to the District and the Coffs Coast community.

"Keith Driver and Clifford Last will step away from operations, retaining the rank of retired group captain as we will continue to call upon them to mentor the next generation of District leadership.

"I want to personally extend my gratitude to these gentlemen whose selfless contributions have helped shape the Coffs Coast District.

"My thanks also goes to the family and friends and employers of all our Coffs Coast RFS members, who support them to do the important work they do." Inspector Huer said.

**For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on 9898 1855**  
**For current incidents or major fire updates visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)**