



# RFS

## Media release

### **Castlereagh Zone celebrates 3,000 years of combined service and significant bolstering of firefighting fleet**

**31 July 2025**

Deputy Commissioner Peter McKechnie AFSM will be joined by special guests and fellow NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) members to present medals and officially handover 13 state-of-the-art firefighting appliances at two ceremonies in Coonabarabran and Gilgandra.

Over the next two days, RFS members will come together to recognise the dedication and commitment of local volunteers, with 88 RFS Long Service Medals to be presented - representing nearly 3,000 years of combined service.

Deputy Commissioner Peter McKechnie said the ceremonies will also mark the official handover of 13 new state-of-the-art firefighting trucks to brigades across rural and northern NSW, bolstering the Service's capability ahead of the next fire season.

"These medal ceremonies are an important opportunity to celebrate and thank our volunteers for their extraordinary service to the community," Deputy Commissioner McKechnie said.

"Each medal represents years, and in many cases, decades - of commitment, sacrifice and selfless service.

"To be recognising almost 3,000 years of combined service is simply remarkable, and it speaks to the strong spirit of volunteering that exists in these rural communities," he said.

Deputy Commissioner McKechnie gave a special mention to firefighter Leslie "Dick" Nott AFSM for an incredible 72 years of service to his community.

"With more than seven decades of dedicated service, members like Dick truly embody the spirit and heart of the RFS," said Deputy Commissioner McKechnie.

"At 86 years of age, Dick continues to serve his community proudly as an active member of the Coona Fringe Brigade as well as the Castlereagh Support Brigade."

The 13 new firefighting trucks, valued at over \$3 million, are part of the Service's ongoing investment in regional and remote firefighting capability.

"These new trucks represent a major step forward in supporting our frontline volunteers with the tools they need to protect lives, property and the environment," Deputy Commissioner McKechnie said.

"Many of the brigades receiving these trucks operate in challenging terrain and remote areas - this new fleet ensures they are better equipped to respond quickly and safely.

"Investing in modern, reliable equipment is how we match the dedication of our volunteers with the support they deserve," he said.