



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



MEDIA RELEASE

Blue Mountains Brigade wins national award

25 November 2014

The innovation of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade in connecting with their local community during the October 2013 bush fires has been acknowledged yesterday with a 2014 Resilient Australia Award.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said the national awards recognise practises that help build safer, stronger and more disaster resilient communities that are better prepared to manage emergency situations.

“When the State Mine Fire threatened the small communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine in the Blue Mountains, the Brigade recognised the unique characteristics of the local community and let that guide their community engagement plan,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“Thanks to their efforts, the community was involved at unprecedented levels with more than 60 percent of residents participating in the response. 40 percent of those involved were not Brigade members.

“This level of engagement is a testament to the hard work of this Brigade and their dedication to acknowledging the needs of their community in order to keep residents safe and informed.”

The Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade were the joint winners of the Not for Profit category.

NSW RFS and NSW Aboriginal Lands Council were also acknowledged with a Highly Commended award in the Government Category for a joint program designed to build bush fire resilience in Aboriginal communities.

“This program not only saw more than 50 community members trained in firefighting techniques, but it also provided valuable cultural awareness for NSW RFS staff,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said that through both of these programs, the Service is helping to develop more resilient communities.

“Having an informed and prepared community is critical to saving lives, minimising property loss and ensuring our communities are able to pull through these devastating events,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“Community engagement is a crucial part of the bush fire management package. Congratulations to both these programs for their hard work and these awards.”

Following on from their success as winners of the award in NSW, both groups were awarded by Minister Michael Keenan at a ceremony at the War Memorial on Monday 24 November 2014.



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