



MEDIA RELEASE

Employers honoured for supporting firefighting efforts

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Businesses make a vital and ongoing contribution to volunteer firefighting across the State and NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons was today honoured to acknowledge the support of outstanding employers with Special Commendation awards.

The NSW RFS Supportive Employers Program recognises businesses who generously grant volunteers leave to attend emergency incidents during work hours without financial disadvantage.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said this year's 12 Special Commendation recipients include churches, clubs, family businesses, large companies and government agencies.

"The businesses receiving Special Commendations today have gone above and beyond with their support, not only releasing employees for volunteer duties but also implementing measures such as specialized leave or promoting volunteering achievements," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons thanked all employers who support NSW RFS volunteers, noting that having workers off tools or away from the office can be challenging.

"I know having staff called away, sometimes for extended periods, puts pressure on workplace productivity and I would like to sincerely thank those employers who provide leave to NSW RFS volunteers," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"Just like the volunteers who jump on trucks, operate radios and feed hundreds of responding firefighters and emergency service workers, employers who support volunteers make a very direct contribution to frontline firefighting efforts in NSW.

"The upcoming bush fire season has the potential to be a very challenging one but it is reassuring to know we will once again be able to rely on the support of bosses and businesses right across NSW."

Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott said employers that actively encourage employees to volunteer are contributing to a safer community.

"The support of these employers is one of the key elements in helping NSW RFS volunteers protect their local community," Mr Elliott said.

"Volunteers continually dedicate their time to protecting communities across the State and this couldn't happen without supportive employers."

The Supportive Employer Program was launched in March 2013 to recognise the essential contribution employers make to the volunteering effort. Since then, 178 businesses have been presented with a Certificate of Appreciation and 36 have received a Special Commendation.

2015 NSW RFS Supportive Employer Special Commendation recipients

- Bega Cheese
- C2K Swimming
- Catholic Education Office
- Cummins South Pacific
- Defence Archives Directorate
- Essential Energy
- QUBE
- RM and HY Eglinton and Son
- Sayers Smash Repairs
- Taronga Western Plains Zoo
- Taylor's Hardware
- Wesley Mission.

