



## Shoalhaven's dedicated firefighters praised

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Shoalhaven residents are no strangers to devastating bush fires and it is the memory of these fires that help drive the army of local NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) volunteers during the summer months.

NSW RFS Assistant Commissioner Dominic Lane said the breadth of experience amongst firefighters in the Shoalhaven area was on show today, with 36 members being awarded.

"All of these volunteers are highly skilled and well trained individuals who have spent many years responding to a range of incidents including bush fires, motor vehicle accidents and house fires, as well as assisting during floods and storms.

"More than seven members receiving Long Service Medals today have been serving their local communities and the NSW RFS for more than 30 years.

"Mr Brian Leonard first started fighting fires in 1967 when he joined the Waterfall Brigade and he has continued to protect his community from fire with that same fervour ever since.

"In 2003 he transferred to the Cudmirrah Brigade where he has held numerous senior positions including Brigade President and Senior Deputy Captain.

"Mr Leonard and many others like him serve as a constant source of inspiration to the younger members of the service.

"All of our junior members and new recruits are trained by senior volunteers so there is a continual transfer of knowledge and skills occurring within the ranks of the NSW RFS," said Assistant Commissioner Lane.

Assistant Commissioner Lane said volunteers are by their very nature selfless individuals who are generous with their time and energy.

"It is very rare and unique to have a service of such dedicated professionals who often give up their own livelihoods to help others in times of emergency.

"Each and every one of the volunteers here today is worthy of our most sincere thanks and I would like to personally praise them, not only for their commitment to the Service, but also their community," said Assistant Commissioner Lane.

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