

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Longstanding volunteers from the Northern Rivers officially recognised

3 March 2012

A group of experienced NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) volunteers gathered in Casino today where Assistant Commissioner Keith Harrap acknowledged their ongoing dedication.

Thirty three of the area's most longstanding members were awarded with Long Service Medals by Assistant Commissioner Harrap.

"It is a tremendous honour to present these awards, and I would personally like to acknowledge the unfaltering commitment of our members in the Northern Rivers area.

"As recent events have proven, our volunteers are on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help the community in times of emergency – frequently in extreme weather conditions.

"Whilst preventing and fighting bush fires may be our core expertise, more recently our members skills have also proved invaluable assisting the State Emergency Service during floods. It is this diversity that the Rural Fire Service prides itself on."

Assistant Commissioner Harrap said that between them these men and women have amassed more than 800 years of service to both their brigade and the community.

"I would particularly like to acknowledge the six gentlemen who are being recognised today for more than 40 years service to the NSW RFS.

"Bill Berry joined the Service following his return from World War II in 1949. Bill has been an asset to his brigade serving as Captain, Treasurer, Secretary and President during the past 61 years – a legacy that is now being carried on by two of his grandchildren.

"John Mace, Maurice Stralow, Kevin Soward, John Paisley and Ron Waddell have each been with their local brigades for more than 40 years, demonstrating a high degree of loyalty and community spirit."

Assistant Commissioner Harrap said there are 49 brigades in the Northern Rivers area that respond to more than 200 bush and house fires as well as motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies each year.

"Each of these volunteers go over and above the call of duty to serve their community, a contribution that is worthy of our most sincere gratitude," Assistant Commissioner Harrap concluded.

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