



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Bravery and commitment of firefighters recognised on St Florian's Day

4 May 2022

From pulling a man from a burning building to delivering hampers for COVID-stricken communities, 19 NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) staff, volunteers and teams have been honoured for their bravery and exceptional service.

NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers was today joined by Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience and Minister for Flood Recovery Steph Cooke to recognise the efforts of the NSW RFS members at the annual St Florian's Day awards.

Held on the fourth of May each year, the award ceremony coincides with the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters and International Firefighters' Day.

Commissioner Rogers praised the recipients for their ongoing hard work and professionalism.

"These past few years have seen the State face fires, floods and a global pandemic, and our NSW RFS members have selflessly stepped up to help communities through these challenges," Commissioner Rogers said.

Minister Cooke thanked each award recipients for their dedication and commitment to serving and protecting communities across NSW.

"I am incredibly proud of our NSW RFS staff and volunteers who remain on call, day after day, responding to all manner of emergencies and incidents," Ms Cooke said.

Commissioner Rogers paid special tribute to firefighter Lee Byrne, who was awarded a Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.

Firefighter Byrne, who is a member of the Baan Baa Brigade, was part of the team responding to a house fire in Baan Baa about 8.30pm on 10 July 2021. When he arrived at the home, Firefighter Byrne was informed that a person may be trapped by fire inside the building.

"The building was engulfed by fire as Firefighter Byrne forced entry into the house, where he found a man unresponsive on the floor," Commissioner Rogers said.

"Bravely, he pulled the man from the home and performed first aid to help resuscitate him. Firefighter Byrne risked his life and put himself in harm's way to try and save someone's life."

Sadly, the man passed away before NSW Ambulance paramedics arrived.

Firefighter Byrne's fellow Baan Baa Brigade members received a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit) for their response to the house fire and for the comfort they provided to the man's grieving son, who was on scene at the time of the fire.

"In what was a very distressing situation, these brigade members displayed great dignity and professionalism," Commissioner Rogers said.

**For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on 9898 1855**  
**For current incidents or major fire updates visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)**

The Bourke Headquarters Brigade received the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation for going above and beyond to aid their community during a COVID-19 outbreak.

In August 2021, a hub for community assistance was set up at the Bourke Fire Control Centre with members of the Bourke Headquarters Brigade becoming key personnel to distribute care and food hampers across the region, including to Enngonia, Louth, Fords Bridge, Wanaaring and Byrock.

Commissioner Rogers said the volunteers worked 700 hours in morning and afternoon shifts by the end of the outbreak in October 2021.

"It is humbling to see the lengths our volunteers went to – including multiple 300 kilometre trips to Enngonia – to ensure remote communities affected by COVID-19 could still have these essential supplies," Commissioner Rogers said.

"During this outbreak, these dedicated volunteers delivered 1,000 hampers and 250 fresh fruit and vegetable parcels to people. NSW RFS members are always there for their communities – in sickness and in health."

The full list of recipients of the 2022 St Florian's Day Awards is available here: [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/st-florians-day-2022](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/st-florians-day-2022).

