



RFS

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Media release

Northern Rivers RFS members honoured for generosity and dedicated service

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The dedication and generosity of 62 RFS volunteers from across the Northern Rivers District were recognised last night with the presentation of awards and medals in recognition of their service.

RFS Assistant Commissioner Kyle Stewart APM joined Janelle Saffin MP and guests to present three Humanitarian Overseas Service Awards, three Commissioner's Commendations, 11 Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation and 45 Long Service Medals.

Assistant Commissioner Stewart said with years of service ranging from 10 to 53 years, many of these volunteers have dedicated a significant portion of their life to protecting others and are worthy of thanks.

"The professionalism of all RFS members does not go unnoticed and while they don't do the work for praise, their contribution and commitment to the community is outstanding," Assistant Commissioner Stewart said.

"I thank each recipient for their selfless dedication, with a special mention to Jeff Whitney, who was recognised not only for an impressive 53 years of dedicated service, but also for his years of ongoing commitment to maintaining the Haystack Mountain Communications Tower with his wife Cheryl.

"The husband-and-wife duo are testament to the continued generosity of our members."

"A special mention to Tait Bedlington, JJ Bruce and Neil Coulter who were deployed to Canada in 2017 as remote area firefighters. They reached out to provide much needed relief to their international colleagues despite the dangers involved and were recognised for their sustained service during significant emergencies with a Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal.

"I also recognise the courage and resilience of the 11 worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation for their bravery when one of their comrades, Senior Deputy John Holmes suffered a fatal medical episode while fighting a fire near Bonalbo."

Ms Saffin said RFS members are resilient, hard-working and worthy of praise.

"We honour not only their dedication to our own local communities but also to those further afield who need help when fires strike." Ms Saffin said.

"I also acknowledge those who support volunteers in what they do - the family, friends, employers and colleagues of all RFS volunteers.

"We know it takes their ongoing support and patience to assist and enable our volunteers to do what they do to save lives and property."