

# MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## Gloucester's volunteer firefighters celebrated

16 June 2012

A collection of selfless Gloucester volunteers have had their contribution recognised at a ceremony marking their long and dedicated service.

Presenting the members with their medals, NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons praised their long-standing commitment to the community, noting their professionalism and willingness to lend their time to helping others.

"These 17 men and women represent the values at the very heart of the Rural Fire Service; dedication, camaraderie and sacrifice.

"Between them these members have close to 500 years of experience – experience that helps protect and prepare local residents for the very real threat of bush fire, as well as providing round-the-clock support at all manner of emergency situations.

"Whilst mitigating and suppressing bush and grass fires may be our core business, we must acknowledge the broad skill set that comes with being an RFS member. Our men and women are frequently the first on scene at traffic accidents and house fires, as well as offering assistance to other agencies when required. This level of commitment takes courage, endurance and sacrifice – and I would personally like to thank all of our volunteers for their ongoing hard work and professionalism."

Commissioner Fitzsimmons made particular mention of Eric Schneider and Kenneth Connolly who have notched up 50 and 60 years service respectively.

"Like everyone here today these gentleman are an inspiration. Their knowledge and steadfast leadership continues to serve both the community and the Service well, and we should all be most grateful for their tireless efforts.

"Although we have recently experienced unseasonably quiet bush fire seasons, the prolonged wet weather has inevitably resulted in higher than average grass and vegetation growth.

"Looking ahead to the next fire season the community is relying on our experienced firefighters and it is important they know that their commitment is deeply appreciated," concluded Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

**Media Contact: NSW RFS State Duty Media Officer (02) 9898 1855**