

# MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## Volunteers from the MIA area celebrated

26 May 2012

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons has paid tribute to the dedication of Rural Fire Brigade members from throughout the MIA area, presenting 27 members with Long Service Medals at an official ceremony.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons acknowledged the volunteers' longstanding dedication to their local communities, noting the inherent selflessness of members gathered.

"The MIA area is rightfully known as 'the food bowl of the world' being a key producer of fruit and vegetables that are distributed throughout Australia, as well as overseas.

"Volunteers in this area work hard to protect these extensive crops through hazard reduction burning and a great deal of grazing and slashing is also used to minimise fuel growth.

"Service members are involved in so much more than responding to incidents; hazard reduction work, particularly at this time of year, is a very important part of managing the potential fire threat in this area.

"These members are also heavily involved in community education with regular exhibits at field days and local shows. Local brigades are also frequent visitors at around 30 schools in the area, educating students about fire safety and the Service.

"Some of the members being recognised today have been protecting their communities for more than 50, 60 and 70 years which is an outstanding achievement," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons made particular mention of Tom Manning and Roy Stacy who have been members for 62 and 70 years respectively and have both been honoured with Australian Fire Services Medals for their invaluable contribution.

"Roy is receiving a medal for 70 years of service today – having first joined the Kooba Brigade in 1942. He has a comprehensive knowledge of the land that has proved invaluable in the numerous fires he has fought during his long tenure with Service. Roy also represents NSW Farmers on the local Bush Fire Management Committee.

"Both of these gentlemen are excellent examples of the steadfast dedication demonstrated by RFS volunteers right across the state.

"Whether it's responding to bush fire emergencies, like we've seen on many occasions over the years, or more recently assisting with flood rescue and recovery – our volunteers are on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week." Commissioner Fitzsimmons concluded.

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