



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



MEDIA RELEASE

Gwandalan/Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade celebrates 60 years

16 September 2017

Gwandalan/Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) volunteers today celebrated 60 years of protecting the Central Coast community from fire at a ceremony marking the anniversary milestone.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons congratulated Gwandalan/Summerland Point members past and present on their 60-year achievement and thanked them for their ongoing dedication to the Service and the local community.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said the Gwandalan/Summerland Point RFB's story is a fine example of a Brigade evolving over time while maintaining its core values of volunteerism and community service.

The Gwandalan/Summerland Point RFB was formed in 1957, before which time any available man, woman or child had been called upon to fight local fires.

"As the local population increased, the need for an official Brigade became evident and Gwandalan/Summerland Point was formed," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"In the early days, the local Post Office was an integral part of the local callout system and when there was a fire, the siren on the old 1944 Chevrolet Blitz Wagon was sounded to summon volunteers.

"By 1960, plans to build the Brigade a permanent home were underway and, with the help of eager volunteers, the station was officially opened on 4 May, 1963."

The 70s were a watershed decade for the Gwandalan/Summerland Point RFB, with the original 1944 truck replaced by a Leyland tanker, the introduction of radios to improve communications on firegrounds and the formation of a Ladies Auxiliary to raise funds to purchase new equipment.

By 1991 the Brigade had moved to a new station and members expanded their skills by completing out-of-area training, which enabled them to be deployed to assist with the 1994 Blue Mountains fires.

"The Brigade is now very well established and respected by the local community it serves and that is testament to the dedication of both its current members and the efforts of all of those who were a part of the Brigade throughout its history," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"As well as attending fires and motor vehicle accidents, the Brigade maintains a close relationship with the Gwandalan and Summerland Point communities through street meetings and open days."

"It is the dedication of all members that will see the Gwandalan/Summerland Point Brigade maintain a strong presence in the community into the future."

**For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on (02) 9898 1855.
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