

Jihad Dib

Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Youth Justice

**Media Release****NSW Mourns Rural Fire Service Volunteer****Friday, 17 November 2023**

The NSW Government today expressed its deepest sympathies to the family of a NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteer firefighter who lost his life in Northern NSW.

The RFS has confirmed Leonardus (Leo) Fransen, 75, died after he was struck by a tree yesterday while working on the Hudson fire outside of Walgett.

Captain Fransen was a life member of the Diamond Beach Rural Fire Brigade on the NSW Mid Coast. Joining the brigade in 2010, he held various roles and most recently served as Captain.

Fellow RFS members came to the volunteer's assistance until ambulance paramedics arrived. He was then transported to a Lightning Ridge medical facility where he tragically passed away.

The RFS is providing support to the volunteer's family, friends and firefighting colleagues.

Support is also available through:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- NSW RFS members can contact the Critical Incident Support Services Team or the Member Assistance Program for free assistance.

Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib said:

“This loss will be deeply felt by the family of the brave volunteer who lost his life defending the people of NSW and my heart goes out to them.”

“Captain Fransen was selflessly supporting a community in need and tragically lost his life.”

“I would also like to pay tribute to the brigade members who came to his assistance yesterday and will continue to fight this fire as best they can. They are also in our thoughts as they mourn the loss of a valued colleague along with those back at his home brigade at Diamond Beach.”

“In recent weeks, thousands of our volunteer firefighters have been out across NSW protecting communities and doing what they do best, and I know they will feel this loss.”

“Our emergency service volunteers give so much helping to keep others safe, we are devastated at the loss of a firefighter who gave his life in service to our community.”

“We thank volunteers for everything they do to keep us safe on this extremely difficult day.”

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