

# MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## Praise for Greater Taree's long-serving volunteer firefighters

6 April 2013

Some of the Greater Taree areas most experienced volunteer firefighters were applauded today for helping protect their local communities from the ravages of fire.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons acknowledged the volunteers' unwavering dedication to their local communities and thanked them for selflessly giving up their time.

"The Greater Taree area is no stranger to bush fires and everybody living in this region knows all too well the hard work, professionalism and pride that comes with being a NSW RFS volunteer.

"Whether it's responding to bush fire emergencies, like those we've seen in recent times, or assisting with flood rescue and recovery, our volunteers are on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Some of the members being recognised today have been serving with their brigades for more than 30, 40 and 50 years, which is an extraordinary achievement," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons

Commissioner Fitzsimmons made particular mention of Paul Tollis and Julius Schilpzand who have been members for 45 and 51 years respectively, each notching up a noteworthy career.

"Paul dedication has spanned across two brigades and 45 years of service. With a passion for training, his ideas, knowledge and expertise are put to good use in his current role as captain of the Rainbow Flat Brigade.

"Also a member of the Rainbow Flat Brigade, Julius has been an active member of the rural fire service for more than 51 years. Julius has assisted at numerous major fires across NSW in his time including recently travelling to Coonabarabran to help battle that major fire in January.

"Both of these members, along with all the members receiving medals today, are shining examples of the steadfast dedication demonstrated by NSW RFS volunteer firefighters throughout the state.

"Whilst these volunteers certainly don't expect awards or accolades, all of them are most worthy of our sincere gratitude and thanks," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

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