

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Lower Hunter area's most experienced firies commended

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The breadth of experience and knowledge within the ranks of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) was on show at a Long Service Medal Ceremony held in Cessnock today.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said the group of 48 longstanding volunteer firefighters were awarded for many years of diligent service to their local communities.

"The volunteers receiving these special awards are from all walks of life, but they all have one thing in common, the desire to protect their neighbours lives and properties during times of emergency.

"Whilst preventing and fighting bush fires may be our core expertise, these members also frequently use their skills to extinguish car and house fires, as well as assisting numerous other emergency services in NSW," said Deputy Commissioner Rogers.

Deputy Commissioner Rogers said the diverse terrain in the area demanded a high level of skill from volunteers to successfully fight both fast moving grass fires on flat farming land, as well as bush fires in the more thickly forested areas of the Lower Hunter.

"Between them these volunteers have amassed more than 915 years of service, and I would like to make particular mention of volunteers being awarded the prestigious National Medal today.

"This medal is presented to those firefighters who have gone over and above the call of duty; maintaining a consistently high level of training and physical fitness for at least 15 years.

"Michelle Allan is being awarded the National Medal for 23 years of service today, an outstanding achievement.

"Michelle joined the Benwerrin Brigade in 1989 and since that time has been a driving force behind many community engagement initiatives, has been involved in a number of significant fires and is a Deputy Captain.

"Robert Greig is also being awarded the National Medal for his commitment to the Wollombi Brigade and for successfully coordinating the Remote Area Firefighting Teams in the Lower Hunter area.

"This bush fire season is set to be a challenging one. During the busy summer months the community will be relying on these experienced members for their comprehensive local knowledge, their well honed firefighting skills and their leadership," said Deputy Commissioner Rogers.

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