

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE - SURF LIFE SAVING NSW

Life savers and firefighters join forces for youth out west

23 January 2012

Volunteers from Surf Life Saving NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) will partner with Father Chris Riley's 'Youth Off The Streets' program to deliver emergency services training for young people in Narrandera and Walgett.

The Director of Member Services, Surf Life Saving NSW and Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club member, Gary Chapman said this follows on from the success of a similar program supported by Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club two years ago. This year's water safety program will be enhanced with the addition of fire safety sessions.

"The majority of young people taking part in this program are from rural indigenous communities and they will gather important skills in what to do in the event of an emergency, whether it is in an aquatic environment or bushfire.

"Engaging with young people in these towns exposes them to a group of dedicated volunteers and possible pathways for themselves to become involved in contributing to their community by becoming volunteers," said Mr Chapman.

Surf Life Savers will educate young people during interactive sessions on a range of aquatic safety messages like the role of a lifesaver, identifying basic surf rescue equipment, personal safety and most importantly how to raise an alarm when in trouble.

The skills taught by Surf Life Saving volunteers will focus on all aquatic environments including the beach, rivers, dams, creeks, pools and other waterways.

NSW RFS Commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons said the NSW RFS will educate young people about fire safe behaviour and survival skills in the event of a fire.

"This program will assist us in developing community minded and resourceful individuals whilst giving young people an appreciation of the contribution that volunteers make to local communities," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

With the assistance of a number of props, such as a smoke house, participants will learn how to report a fire, the principles of 'fire-safe housekeeping', what to do if there is a fire at home or at school and the role of a firefighter.

This year's program has been made possible by a Federal Government Indigenous Sport and Recreation grant. The training will be held in Narrandera on 24 & 25 January and in Walgett on the 27 January.

**Gary Chapman, Director of Member Services Surf Life Saving NSW
NSW RFS State Duty Media Officer**

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