



INTERNAL  
BRAVERY & SERVICE  
AWARDS CEREMONY  
2015




## THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE INTERNAL BRAVERY AND SERVICE AWARDS

The Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS), in recognition of acts of bravery and outstanding service, has established an internal awards system. The Awards were instituted on 1 February 1999. The establishment of an internal awards system is authorised under the Rural Fires Act 1997 and accompanying Regulations. Eligibility for these Awards is extended to all members of the Service as defined within the Act and Regulations.

Nominations for awards must be lodged in accordance with the Service Standards 9.1.1 and on the prescribed nomination form. The Service Standards and nomination form are available on the NSW RFS Intranet and on MyRFS. Copies are also available from Region, Zone, Team and District Offices. Nominations for Internal Bravery and Service Awards close annually on 1 October for presentation on St Florian's Day, 4 May in the following year.

Nominations are sent to the Awards Committee. The Committee consists of representatives from the volunteers and salaried staff of the Service appointed by the Commissioner and is required to fully examine each nomination for eligibility. Once a nomination has been assessed and deemed to be eligible, the Committee then makes a formal recommendation to the Commissioner. If a nominee accepts the nomination, the full details of the member being recognised are then officially listed in the NSW RFS Awards Register. Individuals may be nominated for the Award for Valour, the Commissioner's Commendations for Bravery and for Service or the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Individual and/or Units). Brigades or formally comprised units may also be nominated for the Unit Citation for either Bravery or Service.

The functions of the Awards Committee notwithstanding, the Commissioner may award an Internal Bravery or Service Award to any person at any time and for any reason.



At the Awards Ceremony on 4 May 2015, 21 individual and seven group recipients are to be acknowledged by the Commissioner. Drawn from the Service's Regions and Headquarters these recipients are presented with Awards in recognition of outstanding bravery or service. The fourth of May is chosen each year for the Awards Ceremony as it is the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters and International Firefighters' Day.

## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

*Australians all let us rejoice,  
For we are young and free;  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;  
Our home is girt by sea;  
Our land abounds in nature's gifts  
Of beauty rich and rare;  
In history's page, let every stage  
Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.*

*Beneath our radiant Southern Cross  
We'll toil with hearts and hands;  
To make this Commonwealth of ours  
Renowned of all the lands;  
For those who've come across the seas  
We've boundless plains to share;  
With courage let us all combine  
To Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.*



## THE ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

### National Anthem

NSW RFS Pipes and Drums and State Protocol Squad

### Welcome to Guests

Executive Director Membership and Strategic Services, Bronwyn Jones

### Prayer

Senior Chaplain, Major Ian Spall

### Address

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

### Address

The Hon. David Andrew Elliott, MP  
Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and  
Minister for Veterans Affairs

### Presentation of Awards

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

### Photography

All recipients will be photographed during and following the conclusion of proceedings. A complimentary CD of group and individual photographs will be posted to each recipient.

### Lunch

Recipients and their guests are invited to join the Commissioner for lunch in the marquee and outdoor terrace area

*We wish to thank the NSW RFS Pipes and Drums and State Protocol Squad  
for their assistance during today's festivities.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY

*Awarded to recognise an act of courage under hazardous circumstances where the risk to life has not been as significant as to warrant the Commissioner's Award for Valour but is worthy of recognition.*

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### Firefighter Joshua Denney

Ingleside Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

On 1 October 2013 Firefighter Joshua Denney was a crew member on Ingleside 1A, which responded and arrived first on scene to a fuel tanker crash and resulting fire on Mona Vale Road, Warriewood.

Upon arrival, Firefighter Denney was faced with many significant risks including downed powerlines, several vehicles on fire, bush alight as well as a flowing fuel fire coming from the overturned fuel tanker.

The flowing fuel fire had already resulted in the death of one person, severely burned a second person, burned a number of other casualties and posed a clear, direct and imminent threat to more than 100 members of the public downhill.

Working directly with Firefighter Gary Sambridge, Firefighter Denney commenced Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) operations and worked from below the tanker, directly attacking the fire with foam to protect the injured, the members of public and other emergency service personnel who were under direct threat from the flowing fuel fire.

To undertake this critical task, Firefighter Denney had to position himself downhill of the burning fuel tanker, directly between the overturned tanker and the people the CABA team was trying to protect. Firefighter Denney undertook this tasking at great personal risk.

Firefighter Denney remained in this position of direct and significant danger for more than 30 minutes while the fire was being contained and was eventually extinguished.

Firefighter Denney worked bravely to minimise the loss of life of members of the public as well as that of fellow emergency service personnel.

*Firefighter Joshua Denney is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY

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### **Captain Anthony (Tony) Lord**

Cobar Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Far West Team, Region West

Just before 0800 hours on Sunday 17 August 2014 a call for assistance was received for a fire in the Occidental Hotel, Cobar.

Upon arrival at the scene, Captain Tony Lord of the Cobar Headquarters Brigade reported that the Hotel was well involved in fire and that all responding units were deploying to provide direct attack support to the Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) firefighters who were undertaking search and rescue operations within the residential areas of the Hotel.

At approximately 0905 hours a substantial brick facade along the southern wall of the building suddenly gave way, collapsing outwards onto two FRNSW firefighters and narrowly missing a NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) hose crew, who were forced to run from their position to avoid the falling masonry which showered across the road into buildings and onlookers on the opposite kerb. As a result of the wall collapse, one FRNSW firefighter sustained fatal injuries while the other was seriously injured.

Captain Lord provided initial assistance to an injured FRNSW firefighter and made safe his venting BA cylinder. He also coordinated fire protection for the rescue efforts underway to the second seriously injured FRNSW firefighter. The FRNSW Incident Controller, Tony Walkinshaw, commended Captain Lord's actions by saying they were of the highest calibre as he effectively moved in the Incident Controller role while Tony Walkinshaw coordinated the rescue operation.

*Captain Anthony Lord is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY

*Awarded to recognise an act of courage under hazardous circumstances where the risk to life has not been as significant as to warrant the Commissioner's Award for Valour but is worthy of recognition.*

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**Deputy Captain Timothy (Tim) Lord**

Cobar Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Far West Team, Region West

Just before 0800 hours on Sunday 17 August 2014 a call for assistance was received for a fire in the Occidental Hotel, Cobar.

Upon arrival at the scene, the Cobar Headquarters Brigade Captain reported that the Hotel was well involved in fire and that all responding units were deploying to provide direct attack support to the Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) firefighters who were undertaking search and rescue operations within the residential areas of the Hotel.

At approximately 0905 hours a substantial brick facade along the southern wall of the building suddenly gave way, collapsing outwards onto two FRNSW firefighters and narrowly missing a NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) hose crew, who were forced to run from their position to avoid the falling masonry which showered across the road into buildings and onlookers on the opposite kerb. As a result of the wall collapse, one FRNSW firefighter sustained fatal injuries while the other was seriously injured.

Deputy Captain Tim Lord redeployed a hose line to provide fire protection to the rescue team. He continued to operate in extremely dangerous conditions due to the risk of a further wall collapse during this part of the operation.

*Deputy Captain Timothy Lord is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY

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### Firefighter Gary Sambridge

Ingleside Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

On 1 October 2013 Firefighter Gary Sambridge was a crew member on Ingleside 1A, which responded, and arrived first on scene to a fuel tanker crash and resulting fire on Mona Vale Road, Warriewood.

Upon arrival, Firefighter Sambridge was faced with many significant risks including downed powerlines, several vehicles on fire, bush alight as well as a flowing fuel fire coming from the overturned fuel tanker.

The flowing fuel fire had already resulted in the death of one person, severely burned a second person, burned a number of other casualties and posed a clear, direct and imminent threat to more than 100 members of the public located downhill.

Working directly with Firefighter Joshua Denney, Firefighter Sambridge commenced Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) operations and worked from below the tanker, directly attacking the fire with foam to protect the injured, the members of the public and other emergency service personnel who were under direct threat from the flowing fuel fire.

To undertake this critical task, Firefighter Sambridge had to position himself downhill of the burning fuel tanker, directly between the overturned tanker and the people the CABA team was trying to protect. Firefighter Sambridge undertook this tasking at great personal risk.

Firefighter Sambridge remained in this position of direct and significant danger for over 30 minutes while the fire was being contained and eventually was extinguished.

Firefighter Sambridge worked bravely to minimise the loss of life of members of the public as well as that of fellow emergency service personnel.

*Firefighter Gary Sambridge is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.*





## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY

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### Deputy Captain Christopher Snelson

Geandale Rural Fire Brigade, Far West Team, Region West

Just before 0800 hours on Sunday 17 August 2014 a call for assistance was received for a fire in the Occidental Hotel, Cobar.

Upon arrival at the scene, the Cobar Headquarters Brigade Captain reported that the Hotel was well involved in fire and that all responding units were deploying to provide direct attack support to the Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) firefighters who were undertaking search and rescue operations within the residential areas of the Hotel.

At approximately 0905 hours a substantial brick facade along the southern wall of the building suddenly gave way, collapsing outwards onto two FRNSW firefighters and narrowly missing a NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) hose crew, who were forced to run from their position to avoid the falling masonry which showered across the road into buildings and onlookers on the opposite kerb. As a result of the wall collapse, one FRNSW firefighter sustained fatal injuries while the other was seriously injured.

Deputy Captain Christopher Snelson was undertaking fire suppression activities in close proximity to the injured FRNSW firefighters at the same time of the wall collapse. He immediately ran to the assistance of the injured firefighters, assisting with the recovery of one and subsequently locating the second under the rubble, at this time he commenced work with other firefighters before returning to his allocated fire suppression duties.

*Deputy Captain Christopher Snelson is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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### **Firefighter Timothy Agnew**

Duffys Forest Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

Firefighter Timothy Agnew is recognised for his actions and quick thinking which saved a member of the public on 28 November 2014.

Shortly after arriving at the Duffys Forest Brigade Station to carry out equipment maintenance, Firefighter Agnew was asked by a member of the public for help directing an ambulance. A horse rider had suffered a heart attack and fallen off a horse in the arena near the Station.

Firefighter Agnew immediately went to the patient and successfully administered defibrillation shocks using the Automatic External Defibrillator from the Brigade Station. Firefighter Agnew and two members of the public continued CPR and oxygen administration until paramedics and the Careflight helicopter arrived. The patient regained consciousness and was transported to Royal North Shore Hospital.

Firefighter Agnew's quick thinking and first aid administration is worthy of commendation.

*Firefighter Timothy Agnew is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

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### Deputy Captain Colin Brooker

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

From 2012 to 2014 Davidson Rural Fire Brigade implemented a far reaching community engagement project known as 'Operation Proactive'. The Brigade door knocked more than 2,600 homes on the Brigade's urban interface delivering a Bush Fire Survival Plan and an accompanying letter. The letter outlined their exposure to bush fire risk and also invited residents to attend a community 'Survival Workshop'. Eight community workshops were conducted by the Brigade and were attended by hundreds of residents. At-risk properties, Static Water Sources and Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents candidates were also recorded as a function of the Project.

It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Deputy Captain Colin Brooker championed the project from its inception and was exuberant in encouraging the Brigade as a whole and specifically his crew to embrace the objectives of the Project. It was his enthusiasm that generated that extra participation from members.

Deputy Captain Brooker actively participated in the door knocking phase and the community workshops. His contribution overall was integral to the Project's success.

*Deputy Captain Colin Brooker is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

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### **Firefighter Selin Carroll**

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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Firefighter Selin Carroll created and maintained the extensive database spending many hours behind the scenes to ensure the accuracy of reporting and control documentation of Operation Proactive.

Firefighter Carroll was an active and enthusiastic member who continually challenged the Project's assumptions and goals that led to a better community focus. Her active engagement with residents during the door knock phase, the eight community Survival Workshops along with her energy, passion and dedication contributed significantly to the Project's success.

*Firefighter Selin Carroll is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### **Captain Trent Dowling**

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Captain Trent Dowling championed Operation Proactive to its successful completion. As previous Brigade efforts to engage at-risk residents had proved unsuccessful, Captain Dowling convinced members that to do nothing in the area of community engagement was not an option. It was his foresight and passion to re-engage with the local community that led to the establishment of the Project.

Captain Dowling was an active and dedicated participant in all aspects of the Project. In particular, he delivered articulate, detailed and professional presentations as Brigade Captain at the eight community Survival Workshops attended by a total of 281 residents.

Captain Dowling was at the front line door knocking, leading and continually motivating his members about the Project's value to residents of the local community, Davidson Brigade and the Warringah/Pittwater Rural Fire District.

*Captain Trent Dowling is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### **Firefighter Robert (Bill) Duncan**

Kenthurst Rural Fire Brigade, The Hills, Region East

Firefighter Bill Duncan served as the NSW Rural Fire Service State Protocol Officer from August 2011 to July 2014, bringing a vast amount of knowledge and experience to the role.

Firefighter Duncan saw his role as one of building and broadening the scope of the office, and bringing a greater range of people into the various functions and events of the Service. His belief in the team and what it can achieve was infectious. Through Firefighter Duncan's diligence and enthusiasm, the State Protocol Team grew and the reputation of the team has been enhanced.

While in the role of State Protocol Officer, Firefighter Duncan was also hands on with the Kenthurst Rural Fire Brigade Community Engagement Program, which he initiated. Firefighter Duncan has spent much time and effort not only in his own Brigade and District but continually supporting other District teams to reach their potential. Firefighter Duncan also worked tirelessly on the Blue Mountains disaster recovery effort after the October 2013 bush fires.

Firefighter Duncan is well known for his generosity of spirit and his gentlemanly demeanour to all he meets. In the 2014 Honours List he received the Order of Australia Medal in recognition of his meritorious achievement and service.

*Firefighter Robert Duncan is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

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### Deputy Captain Timothy (Tim) Eliot

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Deputy Captain Tim Eliot championed the project from its inception and was exuberant in encouraging the Brigade as a whole and specifically his crew to embrace the objectives of the Project. It was his enthusiasm that generated that extra participation from members.

Deputy Captain Eliot actively participated in the door knocking phase and the community Survival Workshops. His contribution overall was integral to the Project's success.

*Deputy Captain Timothy Eliot is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

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### Deputy Captain Norman Fountain

Crookwell Rural Fire Brigade, Southern Tablelands, Region South

Since joining Crookwell Rural Fire Brigade in 1997, Deputy Captain Norman Fountain has and continues to provide outstanding service to the NSW Rural Fire Service. His service is well above that normally expected, giving up a significant amount of his personal time, and showing a willingness to take on any additional responsibilities that will assist his Brigade, the Southern Tablelands Zone and the NSW RFS with daily operations.

He demonstrates a high level of dedication to the Service and performs tasks with great diligence. He supports fireground logistics through welfare provision, transport of fuel and resource deliveries. Since successfully obtaining Aviation Basic Knowledge and Air Base Operator qualifications, Deputy Captain Fountain has been involved in airbase operations at several major incidents. His work in running air bases, servicing aircraft with fire retardants, and supporting aircraft radio communications has greatly benefited firefighting campaigns.

Through Deputy Captain Fountain's service, many Southern Tablelands Zone communities have increased fire preparedness and resilience. He has facilitated a wide range of community engagement activities, including property visits, Open Days and Brigade involvement in local festivals and field days. He has also served in community engagement activities for non-fire emergencies, such as task forces sent to Shoalhaven after severe storms in 2010 and Wagga Wagga in 2012 following flooding.

Deputy Captain Fountain has also taken on a mentoring role, leading the future generation of firefighters through training courses and the Secondary School Cadets Program. Serving as the District Coordinator for training, Deputy Captain Fountain has taught a range of courses from Bush Firefighter up to Crew Leader, increasing the skill sets of members across the District. Since 2008 Deputy Captain Fountain has also coordinated and facilitated at least 15 cadet programs in three high schools, with students joining local brigades as a result.

The Service has greatly benefited from Deputy Captain Fountain's contribution across fireground activities, community engagement and training.

*Deputy Captain Norman Fountain is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*





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### Deputy Captain Scott Lawrence

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Deputy Captain Scott Lawrence was a member of the Project team and made a significant contribution to the project planning by risk profiling the entire Brigade's bush interface zone. The resultant maps proved invaluable in the door knock phase of the Project.

Deputy Captain Lawrence was also an active participant in the eight community Survival Workshops.

*Deputy Captain Scott Lawrence is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)

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### **Firefighter Graeme (Tim) MacGregor**

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

From 2012 to 2014 Davidson Rural Fire Brigade implemented a far reaching community engagement project known as 'Operation Proactive'. The Brigade door knocked more than 2,600 homes on the Brigade's urban interface delivering a Bush Fire Survival Plan and an accompanying letter. The letter outlined their exposure to bush fire risk and also invited residents to attend a community 'Survival Workshop'. Eight community workshops were conducted by the Brigade and were attended by hundreds of residents. At-risk properties, Static Water Sources and Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents candidates were also recorded as a function of the Project.

It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Firefighter/Brigade Community Safety Officer (CSO) Tim MacGregor was committed and active in aspects of the Project from its conception and implementation through to the completion of the workshops. He ensured that District Office staff were briefed in the Project's progress and that deliverables aligned with the local Bush Fire Management Plan.

Firefighter/CSO MacGregor continually focused Brigade members to achieve a quality and measurable result so that members understood the importance of community engagement, resilience and the positive contribution Operation Proactive was making to the community.

Firefighter/CSO MacGregor in his role of Davidson Brigade CSO led the organisation and implementation of Operation Proactive. It was his dedication, leadership and steerage of the Project that contributed significantly to its overall impact on the community and its success.

*Firefighter Graeme MacGregor is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### **Firefighter Daryl Meppem**

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Firefighter Daryl Meppem was an actively engaged member of the Project team involved in every aspect of the planning and delivery. He provided specific capability and resources for the preparation of documentation including resident letters and call management material.

It was through Firefighter Meppem's generous donation of time and resources that the Project's printing costs were kept to a minimum.

*Firefighter Daryl Meppem is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### **Firefighter Richard (Rick) Miller**

Wyong Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, The Lakes, Region East

Firefighter Rick Miller's service as an Authorised Fire Wildfire Investigator began in 2006. Since then he has completed more than 400 fire investigations, in his own District and across the State.

Firefighter Miller is known for his dedication, professionalism and meticulous approach. Firefighter Miller has a positive rapport with local and State Police and the quality of his analysis has assisted Police in numerous cases. Over the last three years Firefighter Miller successfully identified numerous, serious arson-related incidents in the Lake Macquarie District. As a result, a strike force was established by NSW Police and seven people have been arrested for arson related crimes. Since then, the Lake Macquarie District has seen a remarkable decrease in incidents.

Firefighter Miller also mentors other Wildfire Investigators, conducts training in Wildfire Investigation, and has assisted in the rewriting of the Service's Wildfire Investigation Course.

Firefighter Miller's dedication and professional attitude is a credit to himself and the Service. His commitment has enhanced the reputation of the NSW RFS Fire Investigator role.

*Firefighter Richard Miller is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### **Firefighter Michael McIlwraith**

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Firefighter Michael McIlwraith was seconded to the Project team to provide expertise and specific professional advice in training the Brigade members for the Project's implementation. It was recognised that all participating members required specific training to ensure consistency and competence when engaging residents.

Firefighter McIlwraith developed, piloted and implemented an extensive self-paced 'online' training module that addressed all requirements and gave members confidence in the door knocking process.

*Firefighter Michael McIlwraith is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### Deputy Group Captain Sean McLoughlin

Ingleside Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

On 1 October 2013 Deputy Group Captain Sean McLoughlin responded to a fuel tanker crash and resulting fire on Mona Vale Road, Warriewood.

Upon arrival, Deputy Group Captain McLoughlin was faced with a flowing fuel fire that had resulted in the death of one person, severely burned a second person, caused various burns to a number of other casualties and posed a clear threat to more than 100 members of the public who had gathered downhill, below the immediate incident site.

Deputy Group Captain McLoughlin undertook the NSW Rural Fire Service Commander role and worked to establish and implement command and control within the immediate danger area.

Throughout the initial stages of the incident, Deputy Group Captain McLoughlin was placed in a position of clear and imminent danger, at great personal risk to undertake reconnaissance, support the operations of firefighters and ensure a coordinated and appropriate response.

Deputy Group Captain McLoughlin worked diligently to reduce the risk of further injury or loss of life to those involved in the crash, members of the public and fellow emergency services personnel who were operating downhill from the fire.

*Deputy Group Captain Sean McLoughlin is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



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### Senior Deputy Captain Darryl Pearson

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade, Warringah Pittwater, Region East

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It is estimated that Operation Proactive has provided greater protection to over 8,000 residents on the Davidson Brigade's urban interface.

Senior Deputy Captain Darryl Pearson was committed to the implementation of Operation Proactive from the outset and tirelessly involved himself in the door knocking phase. His involvement and interaction with residents at the eight community workshops was invaluable.

Senior Deputy Captain Pearson continually encouraged all Brigade members to be involved in the execution of the Project by constantly reinforcing the value of the Project to the Brigade membership.

*Senior Deputy Captain Darryl Pearson is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service.*



## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (INDIVIDUAL)

*Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.*

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### **Matthew Esson**

Hornsby Rural Fire Brigade, Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai, Region East

Deputy Captain Matthew Esson was travelling along the Berkeley Fire Trail in Berowra Heights on 9 March 2014 when he found Mr Tim Bridge, wandering injured and disoriented after a mountain bike accident.

Deputy Captain Esson assessed that the rider had severe neck and back injuries and assisted him to the ground. He made a neck brace from natural materials, rendered first aid, and liaised with emergency services. While waiting for the ambulance to arrive, Deputy Captain Esson provided calm and confident reassurance to Mr Bridge.

Since the accident, Mr Bridge has made a near-full recovery. Mr Bridge and his family have expressed their extreme gratitude to Deputy Captain Esson for his actions. Deputy Captain Esson has also been in regular contact to check on his recovery. Deputy Captain Esson's acts saved Mr Bridge and his family from significant pain and recovery time.

*Deputy Captain Matthew Esson is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation.*





## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (INDIVIDUAL)

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### Stephen Price

Valley Heights Rural Fire Brigade, Blue Mountains, Region East

On 17 October 2014 a fire was reported at Linksview Road Springwood in the Blue Mountains. Within 30 minutes it had crossed Hawkesbury Road and was spreading rapidly east toward the suburbs of Winmalee and Yellow Rock. In just a few hours, nearly 200 homes would be destroyed.

Former Captain, Stephen Price of Valley Heights Rural Fire Brigade was tasked with the reconnaissance on Singles Ridge Road, Winmalee. Captain Price took the Brigade's personnel carrier (PC) to Singles Ridge Road to check on the safety of residents in the area.

On his arrival at the Rainbow Pre-School, where five adults and 13 children aged two to five were on scene, Captain Price made the decision to evacuate everyone. Captain Price made a request by radio for additional appliances. With the fire encroaching, Captain Price loaded the PC with the 13 students and five teachers and drove them to the safety of the Springwood Public School under extreme conditions. Captain Price knew he had to get them all into the PC as there would not be an opportunity for a second trip.

Captain Price then returned to Singles Ridge Road to collect residents who were under threat of fire and unable to leave the area by themselves. On the way back to safety, the vehicle sustained a damaged tyre. Captain Price changed the tyre of the fully loaded vehicle, under severe ember attack, before proceeding back out of the fire area.

Faced with extreme odds Captain Price saved a significant number of children and adults from potential harm with his quick thinking and actions.

*Captain Stephen Price is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation.*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (UNIT)

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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Peter Devaney, Thomas Gates, Michael Hrnjak, Matthew Lancaster, Joshua Sheedy, Douglas Simpson, Joshua Beren, Georgina Christensen, Fadl (Fred) Hijazi, Christopher Hurley, Brendan Kusmenko, David Vane, Joshua Alexander, Andrew Johnston, Scott Molenaar, Gordon Smith, Matthew Kerrigan, Andrew Miller, Lars Steele-Mills, John Watson, Terry Brett, David Golack, Jessica Phillips, Luke Robinson and Kevin Shadforth

Belrose 1A, Belrose 1B, Ingleside 1A, Tumbledown Dick 1 and Warringah Pittwater Headquarters 1

Warringah Pittwater, Region East

On 1 October 2013 the crews of Warringah Pittwater Headquarters 1, Belrose 1A, Belrose 1B, Ingleside 1A, and Tumbledown Dick 1 responded to a fuel tanker crash and resulting fire on Mona Vale Road, Warriewood.

The crews immediately got to work, facing many significant risks including downed powerlines, vehicles on fire, bush alight and a flowing fuel fire. They supported Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) operations and provided an ongoing supply of water and foam.

The units were deployed to various tasks including evacuating and protecting properties adjacent to the fire, providing critical first aid, supplying water, foam and breathing apparatus operators to the firefighting operation.

The noted crews performed meritoriously, working in difficult circumstances to defend life and property and to extinguish multiple fires as a result of the incident.

*Belrose 1A, Belrose 1B, Ingleside 1A, Tumbledown Dick 1 and Warringah Pittwater Headquarters 1 are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service (Unit).*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (UNIT)

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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**Anthony (Tony) Lord, Timothy (Tim) Lord, Travis Buckman, Shane Jones, Robert Cummins, Michael Davies, Joel Mahwhinney, Krystie Clarke-Smith, David Snelson, Christopher Snelson and Ian Maidens**

Cobar Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Geandale Rural Fire Brigade and Far West Team

Region West

At approximately 0800 hours on Sunday 17 August 2014 a call for assistance was received for a fire in the Occidental Hotel, Cobar.

Initial units from the Cobar Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Geandale Rural Fire Brigade and a Far West Team Officer responded to provide firefighting support to Station 256 Cobar Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) units who were also responding to the incident.

Upon arrival at the scene, they were deployed to provide direct attack support to the FRNSW firefighters who were undertaking search and rescue operations within the building. As fire intensity increased all firefighters retreated and commenced defensive firefighting operations.

At approximately 0905 hours a brick facade on the Hotel suddenly collapsed on to Marshall Street, crushing two FRNSW firefighters and narrowly missing a NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) hose crew who were operating nearby. As a result of this event, one FRNSW firefighter sustained fatal injuries, whilst the other was seriously injured.

The immediate impact of this event upon members of Station 256 Cobar FRNSW was devastating and as a result NSW RFS personnel assumed control of the incident and maintained an effective operational response capability until later relieved by additional responding FRNSW units.

*The Cobar Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Geandale Rural Fire Brigade and Far West Team are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service (Unit).*

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE (UNIT)

*Awarded for service of a meritorious nature, or for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or for exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task, not involving bravery.*

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NSW Rural Fire Service: Michael Aquilini, Philip Brockett, Sean Cappell, John Cuthbertson, Adam Davies, Rory Firkins, Adam Hill, Ian Jauncey, Richard Jennings, Robin Miller, Robert Nicol, Damian Oborn, Colin Orman, Robert Pate, Daniel Perriman, Craig Smith, Josh Stannard, Phillip Walker, James Wharton and Bradley Zerbes

National Parks and Wildlife Service: Jason Abel, Chris Banffy, Mark Barrow, Richard Bjork, Nathan Clark, Scott Colefax, Richard Collins, Shane Edmonstone, Dean Egan, Steve Eke, Michael English, Alfred Fazldeen, Greg Frankham, Kim de Govrik, Nigel Holland, Darren Jol, Patrick Kirton, Stephen Mills, Shayne O'Sullivan, Greg Pearce, Tony Pearson, Dough Pritchard and Michael Spilsted

### Remote Area Firefighting Teams

During October 2013, significant fire activity was experienced across NSW. Thousands of hectares and hundreds of homes were burned, and a State of Emergency was declared. At the peak of the emergency, many lives and homes were at risk.

Three fires of significance ignited in the vicinity of Lithgow and the Blue Mountains being the State Mine fire, Mt York fire and the Linksvie Road fire. Due to high temperatures, wind gusts up to 95km/hr and extensive fuel loads, the fires spread rapidly and travelled more than 30 kilometres in 24 hours in some areas. Collectively, these three fires created some of the most challenging conditions experienced by firefighters to date.

Over the following days, an aggressive and robust containment strategy was required to prevent the fire spreading further down the Grose Valley and towards the lower Blue Mountains. A major back burning operation was planned from Blackheath to Mount Banks. This involved the preparation of a strategic control line between two towering sandstone walls either side of the valley near the Blue Gum Forest.

A Remote Area Firefighting Team, made up of NSW Rural Fire Service and National Parks and Wildlife crews, conducted the back-burn during a high risk, night-time operation in steep and rugged terrain. The crews completed this difficult and essential work admirably. Their efforts protected many lives and properties.

*The Remote Area Firefighting Teams are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Commendation for Service (Unit).*

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## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

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### Blue Mountains Rural Fire District

#### Region East

On 17 October 2013, the Blue Mountains community faced three major and out-of-control bush fire events. All Brigades in the Blue Mountains were dispatched and the crews faced extreme fire behaviour, bad weather and a heavy workload.

Despite the conditions, the crews demonstrated service above and beyond the call of duty. All members played a major role in protecting property, communicating with the public and providing logistical support. Every Brigade station had members present to support enquiries from the public.

The Brigades who responded to the initial calls were: Bell, Blackheath/Mt Victoria, Blaxland, Blue Mountains Group Support, Bullaburra, Faulconbridge, Glenbrook Lapstone, Hazelbrook, Katoomba Leura, Lawson, Linden, Medlow Bath, Megalong Valley, Mt Riverview, Mt Tomah, Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine, Shipley, South Katoomba, Valley Heights, Warrimoo, Wentworth Falls, Winmalee, and Woodford. Brigades also provided members to support the Incident Management Team at the Blue Mountains Fire Control Centre.

These Brigades were supported by the diligent guidance of the District's Group Officers, who displayed a very high level of command and control throughout the event. The Group Officers ensured crews were well protected while working in a dangerous and volatile environment.

These fires burned thousands of hectares and, sadly, hundreds of homes. Further destruction of property and possibly life could have occurred if it were not for the diligence of the Blue Mountains District on 17 October. All Brigades and Group Officers demonstrated incredible levels of response, support and community involvement.

*The Blue Mountains Rural Fire District is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*

## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

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### **Bourke Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, Geandale Rural Fire Brigade, Nyngan Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade and Far West Team**

#### **Region West**

At approximately 0800 hours on Sunday 17 August 2014 a call for assistance was received for a fire in the Occidental Hotel, Cobar. At about 0905 hours a brick facade on the southern wall of the Hotel suddenly collapsed on to Marshall Street, crushing two Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) firefighters and narrowly missing a NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) hose crew who were operating nearby. As a result of this event, one FRNSW firefighter sustained fatal injuries, whilst the other was seriously injured.

Additional resources were requested, with both Bourke and Nyngan Headquarters Rural Fire Service Brigades arriving on scene at 1145 hours. They provided assistance and relief to the on-scene crews and proceeded to assist with firefighting activities as required until relieved later that day.

Staff from the Far West Team provided assistance, logistical support, liaison with response organisations and Cobar Shire Council. The Team also supplied communications support for fire ground operations and reporting procedures.

Critical incident support was administered by a local CISS Officer and other members of the Far West Team to the family of the injured firefighters, crew members and other personnel in various locations. This support continued for some weeks following the event.

Cobar is a close knit community and the professional manner of those members who provided a response to this devastating incident is a credit to all.

*The Bourke Headquarters, Geandale and Nyngan Headquarters Rural Fire Brigades and Far West Team are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*



## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

*Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.*

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### Davidson Rural Fire Brigade

Warringah Pittwater, Region East

From 2012 to 2014 Davidson Rural Fire Brigade implemented a far reaching community engagement project known as 'Operation Proactive'. Over two years, Brigade members visited more than 2,600 homes on the bush interface delivering Bush Fire Survival Plans and invitation letters to attend 'Survival Workshops'.

Aiming to better prepare residents for a major bush fire event, develop stronger community relationships and guide residents in the preparation of Bush Fire Survival Plans, the project saw involvement from all levels of the Brigade. Every member participated in training to ensure the Brigade was delivering a consistent message.

The Brigade door knocked every residence hand delivering a Bush Fire Survival Plan and an accompanying letter. The letter outlined their exposure to bush fire risk and invited them to attend a community Survival Workshop. Eight community workshops were conducted by the Brigade and were attended by hundreds of residents.

Operation Proactive was also an opportunity for the Brigade to identify static water sources, recognise at-risk residents which assisted with pre-incident planning, and identify and record Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents candidates.

Davidson Rural Fire Brigade has gone beyond normal expectations of a brigade with the implementation of Operation Proactive, and is therefore worthy of commendation.

*Davidson Rural Fire Brigade is a worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*



## COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION (UNIT)

*Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.*

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### **Mona Vale Tanker Rollover Incident – Warringah Pittwater Supporting Units**

Beacon Hill 1, Davidson 1, Duffys Forest 1, Ingleside 1B, Terrey Hills Pumper, Warringah Pittwater Communications Unit, Warringah Pittwater Group 5 and Warringah Pittwater Staff

Region East

On 1 October 2013 the following crews responded to a fuel tanker crash and resulting fire on Mona Vale Road: Beacon Hill 1, Davidson 1, Duffys Forest 1, Terrey Hills Pumper, Ingleside 1B, Warringah Pittwater Group 5, Warringah Pittwater Communications Unit and Warringah Pittwater staff.

The units were deployed to various tasks including evacuating and protecting properties adjacent to the fire, providing critical first aid, supplying water, foam and breathing apparatus operators to the firefighting operation, and assisting the first-in NSW Rural Fire Service crews. They also established liaison links to ensure a coordinated effort.

The noted crews performed meritoriously under challenging circumstances.

*Mona Vale Tanker Rollover Incident – Warringah Pittwater Supporting Units are worthy recipients of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit).*





## ST FLORIAN'S FEAST DAY, THE FOURTH OF MAY

Firefighters in most European countries celebrate 4 May as St Florian's Feast Day as well as International Firefighters Day. This has been a tradition in central Europe for more than 150 years.

Born about 250 AD in Cetium (now in Austria), Florian joined the Roman army and angered the Emperor Diocletian when he refused to persecute Christians in the area. Florian gave himself up to the soldiers of Aquilinus, the governor, when they were rounding up the Christians. He was twice scourged, half-flayed alive and sentenced to be burnt alive. While being set on fire he challenged the Roman soldiers to light the fire, saying "If you do, I will climb to heaven on the flames". As the soldiers were apprehensive, they took another path and threw Florian into the River Enns with a stone around his neck.

About 600 years later, in approximately 900-950 AD a monastery was built near Florian's tomb, and subsequently the village of St Florian grew around it. St Florian was adopted as the Patron Saint of Poland, following an incident when a person was saved from a fire by invoking St Florian's name. Since then, St Florian has been invoked against fire and has been generally regarded in most countries as the Patron Saint of Firefighters.

Florian is associated with brewers because of a legendary incident in which he miraculously stopped a fire with a single pitcher of water. He is often depicted holding a pitcher of water.

Many miracles of healing are attributed to his intercession and he is invoked as a powerful protector in danger from fire.