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GENERAL

FRNSW staff recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

Five FRNSW firefighters and a long serving employee from Information Technology were awarded Australian Fire Service Medals and the Public Service Medal in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours announced on Monday. In addition, Retained Firefighter Kevin Gray who recently retired after more than 50 years of service at Alstonville Fire Station received the Order of Australia Medal for service to the community. Our AFSM recipients are Chief Superintendent Malcolm Connellan AFSM, Chief Superintendent Craig Brierley AFSM, Inspector Trevor Boshier AFSM, Kempsey Captain Tony Hackenberg AFSM and Hay Captain Mick Edwards AFSM. **John Shenstone PSM from our Information Technology Directorate has been recognised for his work in designing and implementing state of the art radio and telecommunications systems and architecture over a period of nearly 30 years.**

Each of the recipients of these prestigious awards have demonstrated exceptional levels of service and commitment to FRNSW and their local communities for many years, whether through contributing to improved fire safety, mentoring and supporting other firefighters, spearheading change in recruitment processes, or developing better and safer equipment and response capabilities. I congratulate them all on this well deserved recognition.

New station opened at Terrigal

Today I officially opened the new Terrigal Fire Station on the Central Coast, a million dollar investment in our firefighting resources. The old fire station built in 1965 was demolished last year to make way for a new bigger and better two bay station.

Last financial year Terrigal's 16 Retained Firefighters responded to 420 emergency calls and completed nearly 30 community safety and engagement activities. Terrigal and the Central Coast continue to be amongst the fastest growing communities in NSW and the crew had outgrown the "Verrill's era" station. A nice touch was the original fire bell installed in 1947 to alert volunteers sitting in pride of place at the front of the station.

AFAC Forum for Commissioners and Chief Officers

Last week A/Deputy Commissioner Jim Hamilton and I attended the annual AFAC Commissioners and Chief Officers Forum, which was held at the Australian Institute of Police Management at Manly. The forum provides an opportunity for the top operational officers from every urban and rural fire service, SES, National Parks and Forestry service in Australia and New Zealand to come together to discuss issues from the previous 12 months, to plan jointly for major events, and to engage in professional development. The other states and territories were particularly interested in the MFB deployment to Sydney during the October 2013 bushfires, and the FRNSW deployment to Victoria to support the CFA during the Hazelwood mine fire. An outcome of the forum was agreement to develop a national mutual aid plan between states and territories.

National certification for incident management

At the May meeting of the AFAC Council of which I am currently President, we supported development of national certification for incident management, a project designed to formalise standards around Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) roles for Level 3 incidents (equivalent to Section 44 bushfire emergencies or where full incident management teams are required for extended durations). This is part of a professional pathway being developed for fire and emergency service personnel across Australia. Through a certification panel made of incident management experts drawn from AFAC agencies, we will be establishing certification requirements centred on experience, education, ethics and examination of individual achievement. National certification will be voluntary, with formal recognition for both paid staff and volunteers likely to start in late 2014. Education & Training and Operational Capability are currently working together to map competencies and develop log books for senior personnel to record training and actual operations.

Retained Award Toolkit posted on Intranet

As you would be aware, the *Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Retained Firefighting Staff) Award 2014* came into operation on 30 May. Feedback on briefings provided to personnel on the new Award has been positive. Frequently asked questions and answers

are now available in a [Toolkit](#) on the intranet. This page will be updated as further questions are received, so please check the link on a regular basis.

Cappuccino or latte?

A small number of complaints have recently been received from members of the public in several different areas alleging that permanent fire crews regularly visit certain cafes and sit down to have coffee and a chat while obviously on duty and on call. In one instance, it is alleged that several appliances parked in the street outside, apparently a regular week day occurrence, blocking parking for members of the public and "packing out" seating in a popular cafe for nearly an hour. This is obviously not a good look to the public or anybody else. A takeaway coffee is fine and nobody could reasonably complain about hard working emergency service workers having a quick break between jobs. However on-call crews sitting down at cafes and vehicles blocking parking is likely to draw criticism and generate complaints.

Improving hazard identification at incidents

A new initiative from Operational Communications has resulted in additional information for certain incidents that involve electrical hazards and/or asbestos. Responding crews may notice on the bottom of their printout to some incidents a reminder to ensure that power is isolated (refer to SOG 14.2 Isolating Power for details) and/or to inspect the site for friable asbestos (refer to SOG 10.11 Asbestos). This is as a result of recent incidents which have highlighted that we need to improve our identification of hazards in the early stages of an incident.

Alison Donohoe finalist in IPAA Awards

Alison Donohoe, our highly respected and hard working Assistant Director Health and Safety was recently a finalist in the 2014 Institute of Public Administration Awards NSW. Alison was nominated in the Collaboration Award that recognises individuals whose work has transcended institutional barriers. The nomination recognised Alison for her collaboration across FRNSW to ensure that employees understand their role in safety and incorporate it into their daily work practices.

Alison has been working with FRNSW for almost 10 years, following a career in private practice. Alison's background was originally in health promotion, and she moved into her current role in 2010 where she leads a team of over 40 professionals in the areas of injury management, safety and health promotion. Alison's team aims to develop and implement programs to ensure that FRNSW staff operate in the safest of environments, while optimising their own health and wellbeing. Over the last five years, the work undertaken by her team collaboratively with operational commands has helped to achieve a 34% decrease in illness and injury suffered by firefighters at work.

Emergency Services Winter Blood Challenge

This year FRNSW is again participating in the Australian Red Cross Emergency Services Winter Blood Challenge which runs from 16 June to 15 August. Through the Challenge, police, paramedics, firefighters and other emergency service workers and volunteers will compete to see who is the most generous in terms of blood donations.

Last year's inaugural national challenge led to more than 4,700 lives saved across Australia. This is the fifth consecutive year we have taken part in the Blood Challenge. Last year we gave the second most donations for NSW – this year, let's see if we can give even more and contribute to saving even more lives! You can donate individually or get a team together, so let's roll up our sleeves and give blood for the Emergency Services Winter Blood Challenge. See the [Health & Safety intranet page](#) for more information.

INCIDENTS

Cotton truck on fire at Mt Victoria

At 0149 hours on Friday 5 June, FRNSW crews were called to reports of a truck fire on the Great Western Highway at Mt Victoria. 386 Mt Victoria arrived quickly on scene and were confronted with a large semi-trailer laden with cotton bales, overturned and well alight. Initially it was feared the driver may still be trapped inside but fortunately it was discovered he had been able to jump free of the cabin sustaining non-life threatening injuries. The Highway was closed in both directions and although the fire was rapidly contained, between 20 and 30 tonnes of cotton bales continued to smolder. Crews from 361 Leura, 343 Katoomba and 226 Blackheath were called in to assist in the lengthy operation.

With traffic mounting in all directions, firefighters and other services performed a mammoth task to have the highway quickly re-opened by 1000 hrs. Backhoes and excavators were brought in to drag the smoldering bales into a side street and it took another eight hours to break them apart and extinguish the fire. Well done to everyone involved.

High rise rescue in Sydney CBD

Two window cleaners had a lucky escape thanks to the efforts of City of Sydney Aerial Platform operators. FRNSW received a 000 call at 1021hrs on Friday 30 May from two window cleaners trapped in their window cleaning platform near level 5 of a 30-level building at 130 Pitt Street, near King Street, Sydney. A cable had snapped on their rig preventing it from moving either up or down from its position about 15 metres above ground.

Fortunately the window cleaners were harnessed in and well rehearsed in dealing with high altitude events and waited patiently for rescue to arrive. Police Rescue were also called to the scene but it was quickly evident that an aerial ladder-platform would be the most suitable method of rescue. City of Sydney ladder-platform together with the crews from CoS Rescue Pumper and 3 The Rocks assisted in the rescue of the window cleaners who were brought safely to ground level without injury within about 40 minutes. Police Rescue officers then used LP1 to secure the cleaning platform to the building to enable WorkCover to conduct an investigation.

Crews remained on scene into the afternoon until the cleaning platform was finally lowered to the ground. The incident attracted enormous public attention given the inner city location and media reports throughout the day were full of praise for the professional efforts of rescue workers.

ASK THE COMMISSIONER

Q. Is it true that country reliefs are open to all permanent firefighters in the GSA? And if so, why do some firefighters get denied regularly, whilst others from the same platoon in adjoining stations or other platoons at the same station get approved for the country relief position?

A. The Roster Officer has an eligibility list for all country reliefs, split into residentially qualified and others. The Roster Officer works down the list offering the relief to candidates, subject to approval from the Zone Commander. If a particular Platoon and Zone are short of firefighters or Station Officers, the Zone Commander will generally not release firefighters if it will lead to overtime or TOLing, which is why some people at the same station but on another Platoon may be successful while others are not. Qualification availability is also taken into account by the Zone Commander before releasing firefighters to Regional areas.

All efforts are made by the Roster Officer to evenly distribute reliefs over a period of time, and also by the Zone Commander to enable crews gain regional experience and/or work closer to home wherever possible.

Q. Are there any new Pumpers on order for the future, If so what is on order. Are there funds allocated for this and what would be the time frame?

A. Yes. We have a healthy and well funded fleet program. The program has funding of \$12M for 2013/14 which combined with funding carried forward from previous years will allow the completion of a number of Fleet projects. There are nineteen new Class 1 4x4 appliances under construction – five of these will have Compressed Air Foam Systems, seven will be standard tankers and another 1 will be the replacement for the Moree tanker that was over-run in a grass fire. Six will be based on RFS category 1 tanker design, but with a larger capacity pump, electronic Class A foam injection, and SCBA stowage. Delivery is expected to commence late in August 2014.

The replacement of the Class 2 Isuzu appliances commissioned in 1999 has commenced. The Isuzu chassis are being replaced with Mercedes Benz chassis. The existing Class 2 bodies are being modified and refurbished along with the pumps. The updated bodies provide increased stowage, mast mounted scene light and the pump governor is an electronic unit which is very user friendly. The Class 2 has come a long way from when they were first commissioned at 210 horse power with a six speed manual transmission and pump drive through the transfer case. The Mercedes Atego Class 2 is 290 horsepower, 5 speed full automatic with pump drive via hot shift power take off and rear air bag suspension. Firefighters will appreciate the overall increased room within the cabin and general ergonomics of these pumpers.

There are two replacement Incident Command Vehicles being built which will be delivered for the technology fit-out towards the end of 2014. These vehicles will have a sliding side and be built on a 400 horsepower Scania 6X2 chassis with opti-cruise transmission. In addition to these projects FRNSW has called for tenders for the next replacement Class 3 appliances. It is expected that a minimum of six new Class 3s will go into build in 2014/15, and consideration is being given to specialised foam pumpers with compressed air foam systems.

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