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2023 AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

The Australia Day Honours List was announced on 26 January 2023 by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, David Hurley AC DSC (Retd). The Honours List includes the recipients of the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and Emergency Services Medal (ESM).

The AFSM and ESM recognise distinguished service by a volunteer or career member of an Australian fire or emergency service. Only a limited number of medals are awarded each year.

I would like to congratulate the following four recipients.

Justin Foureur AFSM

For 15 years Justin Foureur has been building knowledge and skills for successful emergency rescues. He started as a bush fire volunteer in 1998 before moving to the role of career firefighter with the Royal Australian Air Force between 2002-2004. It was following his return from a Middle East deployment as part of the International Coalition Against Terror that he became engrossed in rescue techniques. While working at the Perth and Midland fire stations in 2010, Mr Foureur was selected for the Urban Search and Rescue team.

After attending a number of fires, natural hazard events and searches he rewrote and improved the Heavy Rescue course in 2013-14. His skills were also crucial at incidents and after one “exceptionally difficult heavy rescue” in 2015 he was appointed DFES Rescue Officer. He developed a three-tiered Trench Rescue training package for DFES, including facilitating the manufacture of specialised equipment needed for the task. Mr Foureur’s comprehensive research of rescues, skills and knowledge played significant roles in the resolution of several trench incidents. In 2017, the successful rescue of a father and child from a trench, performed under his guidance, made global headlines.

Peter Thomas AFSM

Over his 32 years of service Peter Thomas had attended many fire and rescue incidents, but it is his work in preparing others for emergency service tasks that has had a resounding impact on many DFES careers. Mr Thomas commenced with the Rockingham Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) in 1990, serving at times as Captain. In 1994 he became a career firefighter, rising to the rank of Station Officer across Perth’s south and Bunbury. In 2012 he was promoted to Area Manager of the Lower South West and coupled with his relocation to Bridgetown he quickly constructed programs to recruit and improve the skills of volunteers across the region. Mr Thomas has organised a range of training and refresher courses to ensure the volunteers reach a professional level of performance and safety. He has also helped lift the recruitment of volunteers within the district. He is currently in the process of creating training videos on Road Crash Rescues, Hazmat and Structural Firefighting for the availability of all volunteers. Four years ago he commenced the Emergency

Services Cadet Program with Bridgetown Senior High School to introduce students to all services.

In 2020 he received the National Emergency Service Medal after being deployed to help battle the devastating New South Wales bushfires. He remains a member of the Bridgetown VFRS.

George Grant AFSM

Fighting bushfires with his father as a 14-year-old inspired George Grant towards a lifetime of outstanding service to his local community. In 1963, Mr Grant joined the Gingin West Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, starting a 60-year career battling blazes and mentoring others on how to protect their districts. During his tenure at Gingin he has held many positions, including Captain, Lieutenant, Fire Control Officer and Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer, a role he relinquished in 2018 to “give the young ones a go”. So diligent is he to the team that Mr Grant had a service radio fitted to his work vehicle so he could carry out incident management operations. This strategy was particularly valuable when in 2015 the Shire of Gingin had two Level 2 incidents running simultaneously and he was not only a responder but a ground controller. He has also fought blazes outside his district, including 12 hour shifts battling the devastating 2021 Wooroloo fire.

In June 1987, Mr Grant was presented with a Commendation for Brave Conduct for rendering assistance to another volunteer firefighter, which highlighted his high regard for safety of self and others during incidents. Mr Grant has been a leader in his community through his dedication to service and care of others in his volunteer roles. His guidance has ensured the next generation of volunteer bush firefighters is well prepared for the task.

David White ESM

In 1985 David White, better known as John, joined the Kalamunda State Emergency Service (SES). Over 37 years Mr White has shown a dedication to various leadership and management roles, including with the Statewide Operational Response Division (SWORD). Mr White assisted in rescues amid the Moora flood in 1999 and the clean-up after Cyclone Vance in Exmouth later in the year, provided logistical support in fighting the 2002 Norseman Wildfires and helped the Kalbarri area during the devastating Cyclone Seroja in 2021.

He gained considerable experience in land searching and has worked with WA Police as an SES search controller. When he joined SWORD in 2015, shortly after its creation, he took on the task of Unit Manager, developing a team structure, responsibility profiles and operational guidelines. He remains in the role. He has travelled the State providing specialist training programs to SES and DFES personnel. Those programs began at a local level before progressing to other metropolitan units, the regional office and the DFES Training Academy in Forrestfield. Mr White is currently working on delivering Workplace Trainer Assessor courses within DFES. This enables volunteers to train other volunteers in key areas.

For more information please visit the Governor General's [website](#).

DARREN KLEMM AFSM
COMMISSIONER