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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Today marks the start of National Volunteer Week, celebrating the vital role volunteers play in supporting Western Australia (WA).

This year's theme is 'Making a world of difference'. A fitting reflection on the more than 26,000 emergency services volunteers who make a profound difference to the WA community 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days of the year.

Whether you are on the front line, provide administrative or auxiliary support, or mentor new volunteers entering the service, we cannot make WA a safer State without your valuable contribution.

Your knowledge, unwavering dedication and selflessness is admired and greatly appreciated by all in the communities you have helped to protect over the past year.

Our sprawling State has seen its fair share of emergencies in the past few months including extensive bushfires and tropical cyclones affecting communities far and wide. No matter the incident, I was proud to see volunteers from all services stepping up to provide support where they could to their peers and to the communities impacted.

DFES is committed to building an effective and balanced culture to better support the WA community. We are doing this through strengthening our collaboration with volunteers to ensure we are harnessing your abundant knowledge and skillset to better protect the community.

In the past year we have consulted with volunteers and associations to look at how we can support you better, and a number of projects and new initiatives have come to fruition. This includes a new volunteer recruitment website, volunteer research scholarships, resources to support inductions in BGUs, and multiple forums to engage with volunteers to improve service outcomes.

Volunteer Management Support Officers are now in place in metropolitan and regional offices and Volunteer Liaison Officers have also hit the ground running to facilitate and support relationships with volunteers and other key stakeholders.

We will continue to face greater challenges in the future but I am confident we can work together to tackle these challenges head on to create a safer State for our community.



Finally, I would like to congratulate the following volunteers and organisation who are finalists in the 2019 WA Volunteer of the Year.

Finalists

- WA People's Choice 'Spirit of Volunteering' Award – Shirley Oliver (Baldivis VFES)
- Excellence in Volunteer Management – Chris Stickland (Mandurah SES and John Tonkin College Emergency Service Cadet Unit), and DFES District Officer and Swan Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Mike Teraci (East and West Swan BFB)
- WA Corporate Volunteer of the Year – Bankwest 'Virtual Operations Support Team'

The award recipients will be announced at a ceremony on Wednesday 22 May.

DARREN KLEMM AFSM
COMMISSIONER