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2025 AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

The 2025 Australia Day Honours List was announced on Sunday 26 January by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Sam Mostyn AC. The 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 five recipients:

Leonie Briggs ESM

Leonie is an accomplished dog trainer who has been integral to the establishment of Western Australia's State Emergency Service (SES) Canine Unit. She has single-handedly schooled more than 30 dogs since joining the unit 14 years ago, including regionally in Busselton, Albany, Northam and Merredin. A natural-born leader, Leonie served as Local Manager and Deputy Local Manager for the unit between 2014 and 2023. As a first responder, she has shown unwavering mental and physical grit, turning out at all hours with her own dogs to search for lost and missing people in challenging terrain, mainly bush or forest, in rail, hail or shine.

Leonie's achievements locally are impressive, but what makes her a truly outstanding volunteer is her tireless work behind the scenes to improve canine search-and-rescue capabilities across Australia. As a devoted member of the Australian Council of Search and Rescue Dog Organisations, she has worked diligently over nearly a decade to develop the first national standards for search and rescue dogs. The standards will ensure a fair and consistent accreditation process for all canines and are a significant step forward in building confidence in the sector.

Ronald Davey ESM

Ronald is a highly respected State Emergency Service (SES) volunteer who has attended many complex and prolonged incidents over the past 37 years. Known to consistently put the needs of the community ahead of his own, Ronald stands out for his impressive deployment record and long list of credentials. After starting with Kalamunda SES in 1987, Ronald quickly climbed the ranks, holding the position of a deputy team leader for well over a decade, then Team Leader, Section Leader before taking on his current position as a duty officer.



In 2016 he joined the Statewide Operational Response Division (SWORD) as a deputy manager/training manager for the SES Logistics Unit, assisting right across WA during large-scale emergencies. It is testament to Ronald's stellar leadership that the unit's membership lifted nearly tenfold during his five years at the helm. With almost 70 SES qualifications under his belt, Ronald has been a valuable asset at several major incidents in recent years.

Ronald will drop everything to deploy at short notice often to very remote locations with no clear information on when he will return. His outstanding commitment to emergency services has been recognised with life membership for both SWORD SES Logistics Unit and the Kalamunda SES Unit.

Grant Pipe ESM

Grant has played a key role in keeping Western Australians safe during some of the State's worst natural disasters. His impressive 35-year career in emergency services started as a volunteer with Rockingham State Emergency Service (SES) in 1990, where he fulfilled a string of leadership positions before landing the role of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services SES (DFES) district manager in 2007. Grant's dynamic and adaptable leadership style saw him promoted to the position of DFES regional superintendent in the Kimberley in 2012.

During more than a decade of dedicated service to the region, Grant made giant strides in the areas of emergency preparedness and bushfire response. He was instrumental in establishing the Kimberley fire working group, which brings together landowners, Aboriginal corporations and other key agencies to collaborate on mitigation and share knowledge, including traditional burning techniques.

Grant has deployed right across the State to help lead the response to major incidents. In 2022-23 when ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie hit WA's north, Grant again displayed outstanding leadership and quick thinking under pressure, as an incident controller and then operational area manager. During the record-breaking flooding that followed, Grant's strong relationships throughout the Kimberley were key to the successful delivery of services and support to isolated communities, as well as efforts to rebuild vital infrastructure as the appointed State Recovery Coordinator.

Michael Johnston AFSM

Michael has been serving his community as a frontline firefighter for more than 30 years. He has attended some of Western Australia's worst bushfires and has also deployed nation-wide to assist during major emergencies. Now serving as Captain at Kwinana Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, Michael heads a diverse team of more than 30 volunteers.

His dedication to duty was on display during the devastating Waroona-Yarloop bushfires in January 2016, which burned through 69,000 hectares in WA's south west and sadly cost two people their lives. As Captain, he led a crew of firefighters tasked with protecting life, property and infrastructure around Yarloop. The team battled relentless conditions to save a wooden bridge, allowing emergency services access to houses under immediate threat which might otherwise have been lost.



Michael's experience and quick-thinking were also an asset at the Wooroloo bushfires in February 2021, which burned for six days destroying 86 properties. The Kwinana crew worked tirelessly in extreme temperatures over 18 hours to save homes around Gidgegannup.

Gyula Bogar AFSM

Gyula joined Boyup Brook Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) as a 15-year-old in 1967 and has lived and breathed emergency services ever since. There are countless examples of Gyula's drive to improve community safety and make things better for his fellow volunteers. In the 1980s, he was instrumental to the brigade securing appliances and equipment to expand its capabilities into road crash rescue and HAZMAT. And more recently he led landmark upgrades to the Boyup Brook Fire Station, which included gender-separate changerooms with decontamination facilities.

Gyula maintains a strong focus on training and mentoring volunteers. He works hard to build strong relationships with other emergency services in town and is known to go above and beyond in the areas of prevention and preparedness. Boyup Brook VFRS attends many serious road crash rescues, which often involve people known to local volunteers. Gyula is praised for protecting the mental health of his fellow volunteers by leading extraction efforts at two confronting fatal incidents recently.

Gyula also played a key role in asset protection and containment efforts while deployed to a complex of fires that burned through more than 5900 hectares in Donnybrook and Balingup in January 2023.

For more information and to read the full citations for each recipient, please visit the Governor General's [website](#) or contact Sharon Hutchison, Honours and Awards Officer, telephone 9395 9732 or rewards@dfes.wa.gov.au.

DARREN KLEMM AFSM
COMMISSIONER