

KYLIE LEDGER

Volunteer for over 17 years with the NSW Rural Fire Service as a fire fighter & emergency responder, including:

- Officer
- Driver
- Breathing apparatus operator
- Strongly involved in the training space at Brigade, District & commercially
- Recently commenced rescue training and also volunteer through my agency with ASNSW as an emergency medical responder to assist remote Brigades in my area when needed
- Professionally working in the adult education sector in safety, fire and first aid, and in academia in disaster resilience & sustainable development





VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA

Sourced from the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, and based on 2019 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- 3 in 10 people (5.9 million) in Australia are volunteers
- They contributed 596 million volunteers hours
- Gender spread is almost equal (31% male, 29% female)
- People aged 45-54 were most likely to have participated in unpaid voluntary work, followed by 55-69, then 15-24 years of age
- 30% of people volunteered between 21-99 hours, and 28% contributed over 100 hours
- 2 in 5 people had been volunteering for more than 10 years

THE NW RURAL FIRE SERVICE AT A GLANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

OUR MEMBERS



VOLUNTEERS
75,354



STAFF
1,079
FULL TIME
EMPLOYMENT



APPROXIMATELY
60%
OF NSW RFS STAFF ARE,
OR HAVE BEEN, A NSW RFS
VOLUNTEER.

AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

TOTAL INCIDENTS WE ATTENDED

22,885



BUSH/GRASS
FIRES
4,746



STRUCTURE FIRES
1,321



RESCUE
57



FLOOD AND
STORM
148



MOTOR VEHICLE
FIRES
1,835



MOTOR VEHICLE
ACCIDENTS
4,836



ASSIST OTHER
AGENCIES
1,893

OUR ORGANISATION



NSW RFS
DISTRICTS
45



LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREAS
110



AREA
COMMANDS
7



HEADQUARTERS
1



BRIGADES
1,993

TOTAL OPERATIONAL VEHICLES, BOATS AND AIRCRAFT

6,345



FIREFIGHTING
APPLIANCES
3,926



AIRCRAFT
9



MARINE CRAFT
24



BULK WATER
CARRIERS
50



SUPPORT
VEHICLES
2,336

"In Australia, it is economically impractical to employ the number of emergency service workers to adequately respond to fires or other natural hazards such as storms and floods. As a result, Australia benefits from the benevolent support of around 235,000 emergency services volunteers, many of whom have followed in the footsteps of their family's tradition to volunteer.

"This volunteering is a way of life for many in communities and has been for a long time. Volunteer fire brigades were established as early as the mid-19th century and emergency and rescue agencies, such as the State Emergency Services, have their origins in the Civil Defence established in the 1950s."

**Associate Professor Michael Jones and Dr Yoke Berry
Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC and the University of Wollongong
Australian Journal of Emergency Management, April 2017**

Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (2022)

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

- The most common issues cited are ill health, lack of time and lack of interest
- Lack of time and interest may be interconnected – busy people will find the time to volunteer if they see a need and are interested
- People are less willing to commit to ongoing, traditional volunteer roles such as rural fire brigades
- More likely to seek varied, short term roles seeking different experiences with different organisations
- Corporate volunteering through the workplace is popular





WHY DID I VOLUNTEER?

- ❖ My husband joined after the 2003 Canberra fires, wanting to give something back to the community and provide a positive role model for our children
- ❖ In 2005 I joined the Brigade after being asked to assist on the Executive Committee
- ❖ After fires locally, I decided to undergo the entry level fire training, and I realised I loved it! The rest is history....

WHAT MOTIVATES ME?

- ❖ To help my community
- ❖ The challenge – physically & mentally
- ❖ Belonging – my fire family are important to me
- ❖ To help others achieve – I gain a lot of satisfaction mentoring and training others to reach their goals
- ❖ To provide a safe space for others who are looking for purpose and direction
- ❖ Community & operational resilience



WHERE TO FROM HERE?



- ❖ Future proofing – I’m not getting any younger! Upskilling and extending my qualifications in fire and emergency management
- ❖ Improving my fitness – I still like to “get on the tools”
- ❖ Continue to develop up and coming fire fighters, first aiders and disaster professionals
- ❖ Broaden my scope with my academic work and continue to investigate operational and community resilience. Our world is facing the challenge of climate change and disaster impacts, and we need to be prepared

**THANK
YOU!**

