

CFS 'Heroes of the bush' photo takes out national competition

Thursday, 13 May 2010

A photograph capturing the spirit of emergency service volunteering, taken by young South Australian Tim Eckert has been awarded the Secondary School Category National Winner of the 2010 National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition Awards, following a special ceremony at the High Court of Australia in Canberra on Monday.

The photograph, titled 'The heroes of the bush', encapsulates Country Fire Service (CFS) volunteer firefighters recovering after having fought a 3,000 acre bushfire near Meningie that started following hundreds of lightning strikes and involved over 100 CFS volunteers. It was taken by Tim at 11:30pm on News Years Eve 2009.

Tim and his family live near Meningie, close to Lake Alexandrina in the State's upper south east. It is an area facing bushfire risk and the photograph captures the essence of community and team work during emergencies.

South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission Chief Executive, David Place, says he took great pride in presenting fellow South Australian Tim with his national award at the ceremony, which also marked the beginning of National Volunteer Week.

"It was fitting that this special event, recognising emergency service volunteering, marked the commencement of National Volunteer Week. Our emergency service volunteers are a vital resource and competitions such as this allow the community to capture, share and recognise the good work they do.

"Tim truly is a deserving winner; his photograph captured the capacity and commitment of the CFS volunteers involved with the incident.

"It also depicted how very grateful Tim and his community were for the work performed by our CFS volunteers that night. Entering the photograph in the national competition was Tim's way to say thank you," said Mr Place.

Tim, who attends Meningie Area School, said he was excited and honoured to have won the national category for secondary school students.

"Actually I was travelling to Clare in the Mid North that night with my parents when we got a call about the fire on our family property back at Meningie," said the 16-year-old Year 11 student.

"Dad and I returned home, only to find the fire had been contained by the local CFS. As I had my camera with me I pulled it out and took the picture of the firefighters and their trucks just after the event.

"It wasn't until some time later my photography teacher at school saw the photo from that night and mentioned I should enter it in the competition.

"Having nothing to lose I did so and was pretty surprised to be told I was in the final field, let alone find out in due course I had won the national competition.

"We appreciated the CFS doing such a good job, so hopefully the fact the photo featured them provides further recognition."

Fellow South Australian Yvonne Hill, a long standing member of the South Australian Sea Rescue Squadron, was also awarded a National Highly Commended Award within the Individual Category for her photograph capturing the Squadron performing a rescue exercise off West Beach in Adelaide.

The Squadron is a member of Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) in South Australia, a valued member of the emergency services sector.

For further information please call SAFECOM Public Affairs:

MFS Line: (08) 8204 3770
CFS Line: (08) 8212 9849
SES Line: (08) 8211 6176



Media Release



Government of South Australia

South Australian Fire and
Emergency Services Commission

In its third year, the National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition Awards are an initiative of the Attorney-General's Department, supported by state and territory governments, with prizes sponsored by Harvey Norman.

The awards are presented to photographers who aptly capture an image depicting the capability and commitment of emergency service volunteers in Australia and fitting with the Competition theme 'Emergency Management Volunteers – Thank you'.

Further details about the 2010 National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition Awards can be found on the Emergency Management Australia website at www.ema.gov.au.

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Photographs and captions

Photograph No. 1

2010 National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition Awards
National Winner, Secondary Student Category
'The heroes of the bush' Tim Eckert, Meningie Area School

Photographs No. 2

2010 National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition Awards
National Highly Commended Award, Individual Category
'Thanks for the tow mate' Yvonne Hill

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