



Michael Gallacher MLC

Minister for Police
Minister for Emergency Services

Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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**POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
PERSONNEL OFFICIALLY PRAISED FOR THEIR EFFORTS AT QUAKERS HILL
NURSING HOME FIRE LAST YEAR**

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Michael Gallacher and Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, today officially recognised the courage and commitment of the first-responding emergency services personnel at the fatal Quakers Hill nursing home fire on 18 November 2011.

FRNSW firefighters, fire station crews, police officers and nursing home staff were presented with special FRNSW Commendations at a special awards ceremony at Schofields Fire Station today.

Minister Gallacher praised the coordinated efforts of all those involved in one of the biggest rescue operations NSW emergency services have experienced in recent years.

“These emergency services and health workers’ courage, resilience and professionalism were instrumental in a rescue operation that saved the lives of the majority of nursing home,” Minister Gallacher said.

“The Quakers Hill nursing home fire was a significant and devastating event but one at which all of our emergency services worked collaboratively to deliver the best possible outcome they could under incredibly difficult circumstances.

“Today’s presentation is an opportunity to formally acknowledge the actions of those who went above and beyond to help others in that vital initial response and I commend them for their bravery, skills and professionalism.”

Mrs Skinner acknowledged the compassion and professionalism of the paramedics and patient transport officers who responded to the tragic incident.

“Responding to a large scale incident like the fire at Quakers Hill is one that our paramedics train together for, so when an unfortunate incident such as this occurs our emergency services work professionally as a team. That is what happened on this challenging day,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Facing such a scene must have been distressing for all concerned, but the fast response, professionalism and high level clinical care went a long way to ensuring this devastating event was handled in the best manner possible.

“All our Ambulance staff involved should be proud of how they conducted themselves on that day, and today I commend them for their work.” Mrs Skinner said.

FRNSW Commissioner Greg Mullins said FRNSW had nearly 100 firefighters and 20 fire trucks on the scene.

“I said at the time this incident was a firefighter’s worst nightmare – a nursing home fire with many frail elderly people who could not get themselves out of harm’s way.

“This was no regular building fire evacuation. It was a full-scale rescue operation. Amid thick black smoke with zero visibility, falling roof tiles, and an intense fire, every resident in that nursing home had to be physically located, removed, triaged and comforted.

“The recipients of today’s awards were at the forefront of a mammoth emergency response effort which saw nearly 200 nursing home staff, firefighters, police, paramedics, neighbours and passers-by assist in the rescue, treatment and comfort of 88 nursing home residents that day. Their actions deserve recognition”. Commissioner Mullins concluded.