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Media Release

Over 500,000 hours dedicated to emergency help

NSW State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers are being recognised during National SES Week during November for their efforts in serving the community, with 549,803 hours spent responding to storms, floods and other emergencies. The NSW SES and NRMA Insurance have joined forces to recognise this remarkable effort and to encourage Blue Mountains residents to say thank you to their local volunteers.

The past 12 months have been busy for the NSW SES with severe storms and floods affecting many parts of New South Wales. Some of the activities SES volunteers have been involved in include:

- 257,217 hours responding to storm events
- 97,321 hours helping communities affected by flood.
- 3,526 hours carrying out flood rescues
- 5,856 hours assisting with road crash rescue and
- 21,063 hours aiding other emergency services with land searches

Within the Blue Mountains, the SES has attended to 1500 calls for assistance, 1200 of those calls during July this year.

The Blue Mountains Unit has over 100 volunteers from all walks of life. Volunteers range in age from 16 up to 80 and can be involved in any activity from tarping roofs and clearing fallen trees to educating communities about storm and flood safety.

Acting Local Controller John Hughes said SES volunteers provide an invaluable service to the community.

“Our local members have selflessly given up their time to help people during floods, storms and other emergencies. In the last year was significant with the July storm, the worst storm in Blue Mountains history, plus we sent volunteers to both Queensland’s cyclone Yasi and floods in Victoria.”

“National SES Week is a perfect time for residents to say thank you to the volunteers of the SES who have given so much to their communities. It is also an opportune time for people to consider joining the SES to become more involved in their local area.”

According to NRMA Insurance research, 12 per cent of NSW residents report that a neighbour, or they themselves, have had to call on the SES for help as a result of a storm or flood emergency.

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NRMA Insurance Community and Sustainability Manager, Megan Lupton said that without SES volunteers giving up their time to help others, many NSW residents would struggle to cope following wild weather.

"Many of us have shaken the hands of SES volunteers after they've laid tarps on damaged roofs and removed fallen trees from our homes before repair work can begin. Now is the time to formally recognise the great work the volunteers do in helping us prepare for, and cope in the aftermath of severe weather," Ms Lupton said.

National SES Week is celebrated each year by State Emergency Services across Australia as a way of congratulating the 40,000 volunteers nationally for their hard work and dedication to helping people in times of need.

The Blue Mountains Unit are always looking for volunteers to join our field operations at Faulconbridge and Katoomba, or if you prefer to work indoors coordinating resources, volunteers are welcome to join the Operations section at Katoomba.

For more information contact the SES volunteer duty officer on 4782 3200 at anytime.

Released by John Hughes – Acting Local Controller – Blue Mountains Unit

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