

# Media Release



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## ACT Firefighters honoured

ACT Firefighters who were deployed overseas following the Japanese Tsunami and Christchurch earthquake were among a special group acknowledged in a special presentation today by ACT Fire & Rescue.

“It is my pleasure to congratulate all of today’s recipients on what is a special day for firefighters around the world, St Florian’s Day,” ACT Fire & Rescue Chief Officer Paul Swain said.

“St Florian is the Patron Saint for firefighters whose legends include saving a village from flames using a single bucket of water,” he said.

“It is fitting today to award this special group of people and to remind everyone of the dangers involved with being a firefighter.

“This was seen with the Mitchell chemical fire in September last year.

“This fire was one of the biggest industrial or structural incidents the ACT has seen. As well as the intense fire, it fast became a hazardous materials incident, with a number of firefighters acting heroically in keeping fire from breaching into adjoining premises.

Today’s ceremony was an opportunity to also acknowledge Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) firefighters who were sent to Queensland and on international deployments to Christchurch and Japan following natural disasters.

“Fortunately in Australia USAR teams are not called upon often,” ACT Fire & Rescue Chief Officer Paul Swain said.

“When they are required, groups spend periods crawling through confined spaces amongst collapsed buildings to determine if structures are safe and to assist survivors or victims,” he said.

“This is a highly specified field of work for which our USAR members are thoroughly trained for.

“As Chief Officer, it makes me proud that even though the ACT is a small jurisdiction geographically, ACT Fire & Rescue has a high level of expertise that can assist in other rescue zones outside the ACT during emergencies.”

33 firefighters from ACT Fire & Rescue were among a group of recipients today awarded for their efforts with a further 13 also acknowledged for 20 years of service.