

STAR OF COURAGE

Mr Stephen William HYLAND, Qld

On the night of 7 March 2004, Mr Hyland assisted in the rescue of two women being attacked by a man at Birkdale, Queensland.

On the night in question, Mr Hyland was standing on the front landing of his house when he heard frantic screams from across the road. He saw two women run to a next door neighbour's house, thump desperately on the screen door and call out for the police to be called. Moments later the women were confronted by a young man. In a rage the man raised a sword and struck out at the women, severely injuring both of them. Mr Hyland raced to confront the attacker, picking up a second weapon dropped earlier by the offender. Mr Hyland repeatedly demanded the man back away, which resulted in the offender moving away a short distance from the victims. As he did so, Mr Hyland jumped in and stood between the offender and the women, mirroring the offender's movements as he tried again to get at his victims. As the women attempted to escape, the offender pursued them, quickly followed by Mr Hyland who challenged the offender again. One of the women ran up behind Mr Hyland for protection and as he shielded her she desperately screamed for help. Mr Hyland resolutely maintained his position in the standoff, calling out to others in the street to contact the police. The sound of police in the distance spooked the offender and he quickly fled the scene. Mr Hyland checked the condition of the two victims, reassuring them until police and ambulance arrived at the scene. The offender was later apprehended by police.

By his actions, Mr Hyland displayed conspicuous courage.

Mr Michael Anthony TUCKER, 15 Stone Hill Circuit, Cranbourne East Vic 3977

In the early hours of 12 January 2008, Mr Tucker rescued two children from a burning house at Cranbourne, Victoria.

Mr Tucker heard the sound of a nearby smoke alarm and on investigating saw a neighbouring house on fire. He ran to the building to see a mother and father screaming that two of their children were still inside. Mr Tucker raced into the house where sections of the roof had already collapsed and with dense choking smoke restricted his visibility, he was forced to retreat. Mr Tucker grabbed a torch and re-entered the house only to find the light was of no use in the thick blanket of smoke. Covering his face and mouth with a dressing gown, Mr Tucker entered the building for a third time. He struggled through the house but found that access to the children's bedroom was blocked by huge flames. He then raced outside to the back of the building and climbed through a window. He was feeling overcome by the heat and his breathing was dangerously impaired by the black toxic smoke. As Mr Tucker felt his way around inside he stumbled over the two children huddled together under a doona. The smoke was so thick and disorienting that Mr Tucker could no longer see where he had entered the room. As the fire began to consume the house Mr Tucker persisted with his efforts and instinctively found his way back to the opening. One by one he passed the children to the arms of waiting neighbours. Exhausted and overcome by smoke, Mr Tucker fell through the window and slowly crawled away from the burning house. He was helped over a fence where ambulance administered first aid.

By his actions, Mr Tucker displayed conspicuous courage.