

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Miss Trinity Rose BENNETT, Bumberrah Vic 3902

Miss Trinity Bennett is commended for brave conduct for her actions following a vehicle accident near Buchan, Victoria on 20 October 2017.

In the afternoon, Miss Trinity Bennett, then aged 13 years, and her mother were travelling along an isolated road in Buchan. Several days of heavy rainfall had caused the road edges to become soft.

Trinity's mother attempted to make a U-turn in their vehicle when the front of the car began to sink into the soft edge of the road. The edge gave way causing the vehicle to teeter on the edge of a cliff face with a 50 metre drop.

Trinity was able to undo her seat belt and jump out of the vehicle. She landed partway down the embankment in close proximity to the vehicle. Her mother was unable to free herself.

The vehicle then began to slide down the cliff face, hitting a number of trees, before it tipped over the edge landing on its roof in a paddock at the bottom of the cliff.

Trinity made her way down the steep cliff and reached the crumpled and smoking vehicle below. She contacted emergency services and provided them with information on her mother's condition for 40 minutes until help arrived, and her seriously injured mother was taken to hospital.

Senior Constable Benjamin Dallas BREWSTER, Queensland Police

Senior Constable Benjamin Brewster is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a person at Mooloolaba Beach, Queensland on 11 December 2017.

Around midnight, Senior Constable Benjamin Brewster and another officer were on duty when they were notified that a man was threatening to throw himself onto rocks at Mooloolaba Beach.

When Senior Constable Brewster and his colleague arrived at the beach they used torches to locate the man, who had entered the water and was being swamped by the heavy swell.

Senior Constable Brewster threw his gunbelt to his partner and entered the water, battling the heavy conditions and the darkness. The distressed man was about 75 metres from the shore when Senior Constable Brewster reached him. He grabbed hold of the man who put up a struggle. Both men were submerged several times before Senior Constable Brewster was able to get hold of the man again and swim him back to shore.

On reaching waist deep water, the man broke free and swam back out behind the breaking waves. Senior Constable Brewster followed him and grabbed the struggling man again and returned him to shore.

Despite being exhausted from the incident, Senior Constable Brewster restrained the man until paramedics arrived and took him to hospital.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Senior Constable Jonathan CARTMILL, New South Wales Police

Senior Constable Jonathan Cartmill is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from rough surf at Byron Bay, New South Wales on 11 March 2015.

In the afternoon, a swimmer at Byron Beach got into difficulties in strong surf conditions and signalled for help. The sky had become dark and it started to rain.

People on the beach noticed that the man was in difficulty and was now about 130 metres from shore. A surfboard and boogie board were sourced and two men entered the choppy water and made their way out beyond the rough surf zone to where the swimmer was located. The swimmer, who was now having cramps in both legs, was able to grab onto one of the boards.

Senior Constable Jonathan Cartmill entered the water and swam out to the group. He encouraged the two rescuers to use the boogie board whilst he assisted the swimmer onto the surfboard and began making his way through the rough swell in the direction of the shore.

A lifesaver on a jetski arrived and took the fatigued swimmer back to shore. He then made two trips out to bring in Senior Constable Cartmill and the other man, while the other rescuer paddled back to shore on the boogie board.

Mr Utah CHILCOTT, Evans Head NSW 2473

Mr Utah Chilcott is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from a sinking boat off Evans Head, New South Wales on 1 September 2019.

At about 10am, Mr Utah Chilcott was aboard a fishing boat with two other friends when they noticed debris in the water about 5 kilometres off shore from Evans Head. Following the trail of debris they came across an aluminium boat which was overturned and sinking. Two men were clinging to the boat, both entangled in rope, fishing line and other debris, and were struggling to keep their heads above water.

As his friends radioed for assistance, Mr Chilcott dived into the water and swam over to one of the men, who was barely conscious. He assisted the elderly man back to the boat and, with the help of his two friends, managed to lift the man aboard and place him in the recovery position, administered first aid and returned to shore where ambulance crews were waiting.

A second boat arrived and assisted the other man from the water, and to shore.

Mr Chilcott is also receiving a Group Bravery Citation for this event.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Senior Constable Ryan CLARKE, Western Australia Police

Senior Constable Ryan Clarke is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a woman from a bridge in Beckenham, Western Australia on 19 December 2018.

In the early evening, Senior Constable Ryan Clarke, then a Constable, and another officer responded to a call regarding a young woman who had positioned herself on a pedestrian bridge over a busy highway and train line.

St John's Ambulance Officers were in attendance and had attempted to negotiate with the young woman with no result. A freight train approached and it was thought the young woman might jump in front of it. Officers from the mental health co-response team arrived. On recognising the officers, the young woman stood up, left her personal belongings and ran to a more dangerous position on the edge of the highway overpass.

Senior Constable Clarke and his colleague jumped over the safety barrier and approached the young woman, who was sitting with her legs dangling over a 10 metre drop to the roadway. He attempted to verbally engage her, but she refused to interact and was fixated on the ground below.

As the young woman looked away momentarily, Senior Constable Clarke seized the opportunity and dived onto the young woman, grabbing hold of her and pulling her away from the ledge. The young woman struggled with him, kicking out in an aggressive manner whilst they were still in a dangerous position.

Senior Constable Clarke, with the assistance of other officers, restrained the young female, carrying her across the security barrier to safety. She was then taken to hospital for medical treatment.

Mr Robert Shayne COVERLEY, WA

Mr Robert Coverley is commended for brave conduct for his actions following an explosion at a house in Midvale, Western Australia on 16 June 2019.

In the evening, Mr Robert Coverley was at home watching television with his family when he heard a loud boom come from the residence next door.

The explosion shook the house so Mr Coverley looked out his front door and saw a man standing in the driveway of the home unit next door holding a lit Molotov cocktail in his hand. The man was screaming abuse at a woman who was on the ground and yelling for help. The man threw the bottle towards the house, which already was already engulfed in flames, and walked off.

Mr Coverley went to the assistance of the woman and, on reaching her, realised that she had extensive burns to her body. He asked her if there was anyone in the burning house and learnt that another man was inside.

Mr Coverley ran inside the house where he was confronted with large flames. He made his way through the flames and located a man who he pushed out the front door to safety.

He then ran and got some wet towels from his house and placed them on the injured woman and tried to reassure her. Realising that the gas mains to the burning house were still on, he ran back to the front of the house which had flames now coming out of the front window. He quickly turned the gas mains off and also the mains of the house next door.

He returned to the injured woman and, together with others, comforted her until emergency services arrived and took the woman to hospital.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Peter John CRANE, Toowoon Bay NSW 2261

Mr Peter Crane is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from rough surf at Byron Bay, New South Wales on 11 March 2015.

In the afternoon, a swimmer at Byron Beach got into difficulties in strong surf conditions and signalled for help. The sky had become dark and it started to rain.

People on the beach noticed that the man was in difficulty and was now about 130 metres from shore. A surfboard and boogie board were sourced and Mr Peter Crane and another man entered the choppy water and made their way out beyond the rough surf zone to the swimmer was located. The swimmer, who was now having cramps in both legs, was able to grab onto one of the boards.

A third man, a police officer, swam to the group and assisted the swimmer onto the surfboard and began to head towards the shore. Mr Crane and the other man, sharing the boogie board, also began making their way back through the rough swell.

A lifesaver on a jetski arrived and took the fatigued swimmer back to shore. He then made two trips out to bring in the other man and the officer while Mr Crane paddled back to shore on the boogie board.

Senior Constable Ross CUNNINGHAME, Western Australia Police

Senior Constable Ross Cunninghame is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from difficult seas at Broome, Western Australia on 12 November 2018.

At about 2pm, people at Gantheaume Point Cliffs noticed a man struggling in deep water. The man had jumped off the high cliffs and was unable to swim back to the rock face. Waves were breaking over him and he was struggling to keep his head above water as the current swept him out to sea.

A passer-by jumped into the water and swam 150 metres to the distressed swimmer and helped to keep him afloat. The pair were not able to make any headway to return to the shore due to the heavy swell and were tiring.

Senior Constable Ross Cunninghame and two other officers arrived. He and a colleague entered the turbulent water and swam to the pair in distress to assist in keeping them afloat.

Another officer located a stand-up paddle board and made his way out to the group. Senior Constable Cunninghame and the other men were able to cling to the paddle board to stay afloat, until local sea rescue vessels arrived and returned them to shore.

Senior Constable Cunninghame is also receiving a Group Bravery Citation for this incident.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

First Class Constable Dylan EDWARDS, Western Australia Police

First Class Constable Dylan Edwards is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident and house fire in Butler, Western Australia on 7 April 2020.

At around 10pm, First Class Constable Dylan Edwards, then a Constable, and another officer responded to a domestic incident.

On arriving at the house, First Class Constable Edwards and his colleague were met at the door by a child. Despite their requests for the offender to leave the house, the man went into the garage and began dousing the area with petrol before setting it alight. Smoke and flames began to engulf the garage and house.

First Class Constable Edwards and the other officer went inside the burning house and, despite being faced with flames and low visibility, located two children and took them outside to safety. The officers continued to negotiate with the offender who ran outside of the house into the backyard brandishing a kitchen knife, which he held against his chest.

First Class Constable Edwards and the other officer deployed their Tasers but the offender remained standing and did not drop the knife. The other officer struggled with the offender and managed to remove the kitchen knife. First Class Constable Edwards assisted his colleague to handcuff the offender and remove him to safety.

Shortly after, a number of explosions were heard in the garage. First Class Constable Edwards and the other officer provided reassurance to the distressed children. Emergency services arrived and took the offender to hospital.

Mr Peter FABRICI, Margaret River WA 6285

Mr Peter Fabrici is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a person from a burning vehicle near Margaret River, Western Australia on 1 January 2020.

In the early hours of the morning, Mr Peter Fabrici was driving along the Bussell Highway towards Augusta when he noticed a fire in the distance. As he got nearer he saw that two cars had collided.

He stopped his car, called emergency services, and approached one of the vehicles where he could see fire coming from the engine bay. The driver told him that she was trapped and couldn't move her legs. The driver's door was damaged and unable to be opened.

The driver of the second vehicle had exited his car and, despite sustaining facial injuries and being dazed, had gone to check on the trapped driver.

Mr Fabrici, aware of the increasing flames at the front of the trapped woman's vehicle, ran to his vehicle and grabbed a small fire extinguisher which he emptied on the flames. It had minimal effect so he ran back to his vehicle and got a heavy tarpaulin which he spread over the engine of the burning vehicle. This was also ineffective and the flames began to intensify. He returned to his vehicle and got several bottles of water which he emptied on the burning dashboard and the woman to reduce the spread of the flames.

He then opened the rear driver's side door and climbed into the vehicle. After a couple of attempts he was able to pull the woman over the reclined driver's seat and out of the vehicle. He moved the woman and the other injured driver to safety. Moments later the vehicle was fully engulfed in flames. Emergency services arrived shortly after.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Senior Constable Lynden John GANZER, Western Australia Police

Senior Constable Lynden Ganzer is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from difficult seas at Broome, Western Australia on 12 November 2018.

At about 2pm, people at Gantheaume Point Cliffs noticed a man struggling in deep water. The man had jumped off the high cliffs and was unable to swim back to the rock face. Waves were breaking over him and he was struggling to keep his head above water as the current swept him out to sea.

A passer-by jumped into the water and swam 150 metres to the distressed swimmer and helped to keep him afloat. The pair were not able to make any headway to return to the shore due to the heavy swell and were tiring.

Senior Constable Lynden Ganzer and two other officers arrived. He and a colleague entered the turbulent water and swam to the pair in distress to assist in keeping them afloat.

Another officer located a stand-up paddle board and made his way out to the group. Senior Constable Ganzer and the other men were able to cling to the paddle board to stay afloat, until local sea rescue vessels arrived and returned them to shore.

Senior Constable Ganzer is also receiving a Group Bravery Citation for this incident.

Senior Constable Kylie Rae GUNTER, Queensland Police

Senior Constable Kylie Gunter is commended for brave conduct for her actions during an incident with an armed offender in Mackay, Queensland on 30 May 2018.

In the afternoon, Senior Constable Kylie Gunter and two other officers were first on the scene in response to multiple triple 0 calls regarding a gunman in the Central Business District of Mackay. The offender, armed with multiple rifles, had walked up and down Gregory Street, discharging his weapons on several occasions. He then leant against a vehicle and pointed the gun towards his head.

Senior Constable Gunter and the other officers surrounded the gunman so as to prevent him from being near members of the public, and drew their service pistols. They directed him to drop his weapons, but he refused. Officers began to negotiate with the gunman and, after 20 minutes, police negotiators then spoke to the gunman via phone.

Despite knowing the offender's weapons were loaded, Senior Constable Gunter and the other officers stood their posts for approximately 50 minutes until the gunman placed his weapons on the ground and surrendered.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr John HILHORST, SA

Mr John Hilhorst is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a child from a burning house in Christie Downs, South Australia on 8 April 2011.

In the early hours of the morning, Mr John Hilhorst was home when he and other family members were woken by the sounds of glass breaking. Once outside, they saw flames approximately two metres high coming from the windows of a neighbour's unit.

As his wife called out to see if there was anyone inside the burning residence, Mr Hilhorst sourced a hose and began to douse the flames. They heard the sounds of a child inside and Mr Hilhorst quickly made his way to the rear of the unit.

Mr Hilhorst cracked a window, and after smashing the glass and pushing in the screen, he called out for the young boy to come closer to the window. Mr Hilhorst leaned into the room until he could touch the boy's head. He quickly grabbed the boy and pulled him outside.

Mr Hilhorst then entered the laundry of the residence to look for other occupants, but encountered thick, black smoke and was forced back. He returned to the boy and took him to safety and stayed with him until ambulance personnel arrived.

Mr Angus Andrew LAING, Vic

Mr Angus Laing is commended for brave conduct for his actions in the rescue of a woman from a burning apartment in Port Melbourne, Victoria on 11 November 2016.

Mr Angus Laing was passing an apartment in Port Melbourne when he smelt smoke and heard a fire alarm. He looked into the apartment and noticed an elderly woman whose clothes were on fire.

The elderly woman, who was legally blind, had lit a candle but didn't immediately realise that her clothes had also caught alight.

With significant effort, he broke through the security door and smothered the flames on the woman and applied cooling water to her burns and doused the other items on fire.

Mr Laing remained in the apartment and worked to contain the fire before emergency services arrived and took the elderly woman to hospital.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

First Class Constable Daniel Kenneth LODGE, Western Australia Police

First Class Constable Daniel Lodge is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident and house fire in Butler, Western Australia on 7 April 2020.

At around 10pm, First Class Constable Daniel Lodge, then a Constable, and another officer responded to a domestic incident.

On arriving at the house, First Class Constable Lodge and his colleague were met at the door by a child. Despite their requests for the offender to leave the house, the man went into the garage and began dousing the area with petrol before setting it alight. Smoke and flames began to engulf the garage and house.

First Class Constable Lodge and the other officer went inside the burning house and, despite being faced with flames and low visibility, located two children and took them outside to safety. The officers continued to negotiate with the offender who ran outside of the house into the backyard brandishing a kitchen knife, which he held to his chest.

First Class Constable Lodge and the other officer deployed their tasers but the offender remained standing and did not drop the knife. First Class Constable Lodge struggled with the offender and managed to remove the kitchen knife. He was then assisted by his colleague to handcuff the offender and remove him to safety.

Shortly after, a number of explosions were heard in the garage. First Class Constable Lodge and the other officer provided reassurance to the distressed children. Emergency services arrived and took the offender to hospital.

Detective Senior Constable Liam James McWHINNEY, Queensland Police

Detective Senior Constable Liam McWhinney is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident with an armed offender in Mackay, Queensland on 30 May 2018.

In the afternoon, three police officers were first on the scene in response to multiple triple 0 calls regarding a gunman in the Central Business District of Mackay. The offender, armed with multiple rifles, had walked up and down Gregory Street, discharging his weapons on several occasions. He then leant against a vehicle and pointed the gun towards his head.

Arriving on the scene, Detective Senior Constable Liam McWhinney joined the three other officers and surrounded the gunman so as to prevent him from being near members of the public, and drew his service pistol. The officers directed the offender to drop his weapons, but he refused. Detective Senior Constable McWhinney and another officer began to negotiate with the gunman and, after 20 minutes, police negotiators then spoke to the gunman via phone.

Despite knowing the offender's weapons were loaded, Detective Senior Constable McWhinney and the other officers stood their posts for approximately 50 minutes until the gunman placed his weapons on the ground and surrendered.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Peter Anthony MELETOPOULO, NSW

Mr Peter Meletopoulos is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from rough surf at Cronulla Beach, New South Wales on 12 October 2019.

At about 8am, Mr Peter Meletopoulos and another surf lifesaving instructor took a group of trainees for a water training activity session at Elouera Beach. Observing hazardous surf conditions, the group moved to Cronulla Beach.

Mr Meletopoulos noticed a swimmer experiencing difficulties about 100 metres away. Using his paddle board, he made his way to the distressed swimmer and assisted him to a sandbank where the man advised he could stand and make his way to shore. Mr Meletopoulos returned to his training group.

The swimmer again got into difficulties and was swept towards the wall of the ocean rock pool. Mr Meletopoulos returned to assist the man who was becoming exhausted. The man held onto the board and, despite instructions to swim out to safety behind the breaking waves, refused to do so.

The pair were now being impacted by waves from the large surf. Mr Meletopoulos got off the board, held onto the swimmer, and dived them under the waves to avoid being swamped. The strong rip pushed the pair closer to the wall of the ocean rock pool.

As a large set of waves approached, Mr Meletopoulos decided to use the momentum of the waves to get the pair over the rock pool wall. On the first attempt they were unsuccessful. As the second wave hit, the distressed swimmer was deposited unharmed into the relative safety of the rock pool and was able to exit the pool unaided, while Mr Meletopoulos was trapped between his paddle board and a pole and sustained broken ribs and a back injury.

Mr Jack Callum MOHR, Marcoola Qld 4564

Mr Jack Mohr is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a woman from rough surf at Peregian Beach, Queensland on 18 February 2018.

At about 4.30pm, Mr Jack Mohr, then aged 16 years, and a friend, both off-duty surf lifesavers, were walking along Peregian Beach when they saw a woman struggling in difficult surf conditions about 100 metres from shore.

Another person had entered the water in attempt to reach the woman but the conditions forced him back.

While his friend alerted emergency services, Mr Mohr entered the hazardous surf and swam out to the woman, who was caught in a strong rip.

When he reached the distressed woman, she was having difficulty keeping afloat and was being swamped by large waves. He grabbed hold of her and provided reassurance and swimming techniques before pulling her diagonally across the rip. A short time later they reached the safety of the shore where the woman was checked by lifeguards.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Brandon James PENROSE, Vic

Mr Brandon Penrose is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident in Roxburgh Park, Victoria on 7 March 2019.

At about 4pm, Mr Brandon Penrose was driving in heavy afternoon traffic on Somerton Road when he saw a female passenger in a nearby car, being assaulted by the male driver. He yelled at the driver to stop, but the man continued to strike the woman who was crying and calling for help.

Mr Penrose manoeuvred his vehicle in front of the offender's car and when both vehicles stopped at a set of traffic lights, he got out and approached the offender's car. Mr Penrose told the man to stop hitting the woman and that police were on their way. When the lights changed the offender drove off with Mr Penrose following. At the next set of lights, Mr Penrose got out of his car and again approached the offender's vehicle after signalling to other drivers to call police.

As he attempted to remove the offender's keys from the ignition, the man punched Mr Penrose, before getting out of the car. A physical altercation then ensued between the two men. The offender went to the passenger's side of his vehicle and grabbed a steering wheel lock and struck Mr Penrose with it on several occasions. Mr Penrose was unable to get away as vehicles surrounded them.

With the assault continuing, Mr Penrose managed to grab hold of the steering wheel lock before other by-standers stepped in to help restrain the offender. Police arrived shortly afterwards and arrested the offender.

Sergeant Tasman Garrick PLACE, Queensland Police

Sergeant Tasman Place is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident with an armed offender in Mackay, Queensland on 30 May 2018.

In the afternoon, Sergeant Tasman Place and two other officers were first on the scene in response to multiple triple 0 calls regarding a gunman in the Central Business District of Mackay. The offender, armed with multiple rifles, had walked up and down Gregory Street, discharging his weapons on several occasions. He then leant against a vehicle and pointed the gun towards his head.

Sergeant Place and the other officers surrounded the gunman so as to prevent him from being near members of the public, and drew their service pistols. They directed him to drop his weapons, but he refused. Officers began to negotiate with the gunman and, after 20 minutes, police negotiators then spoke to the gunman via phone.

Despite knowing the offender's weapons were loaded, Sergeant Place and the other officers stood their posts for approximately 50 minutes until the gunman placed his weapons on the ground and surrendered.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Laurence Charles SAMS SC OAM, WA

Mr Laurence Sams is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an assault at a shopping centre in Perth, Western Australia on 7 April 2019.

In the afternoon, Mr Laurence Sams was at Garden City Shopping Centre in Booragoon when he noticed a suspected shoplifter about to assault a shop assistant.

Mr Sams yelled at the offender who pushed the shop assistant and raised his arms to hit the woman. Mr Sams, who has a prosthetic limb, got to his feet and moved towards the pair yelling at the offender to stop. The offender then turned his attention to Mr Sams and began to assault him. During the scuffle, Mr Sams slipped on the tiled floor and the offender kicked him numerous times.

Mr Sams grabbed at the offender's leg, however the man managed to flee the scene. He was later located and arrested by police.

Mr Michael David SCANLON, Carine WA 6020

Mr Michael Scanlon is commended for brave conduct for his actions following the rescue of a woman from a house fire in Carine, Western Australia on 11 June 2020.

At around 7am, a person noticed that his neighbour's house was on fire. Believing that the elderly neighbour was inside the house he went to the burning residence and attempted to gain entry. A passer-by stopped to assist and the two men tried to enter the front of the house, but were forced back due to the intensity of the smoke and flames.

Mr Scanlon was riding his bike when he saw the house was on fire. He stopped to assist the two other men who were trying to gain entry. Mr Scanlon tried unsuccessfully to gain entry through the front and side door of the house. Mr Scanlon and the two men then went to the rear of the house where they found all windows and doors were locked. They attempted to smash the rear sliding door, but due to the double glazing and security film they were unsuccessful. On locating a pick axe from a neighbouring residence, Mr Scanlon was able to smash the glass sliding door and he and the other men entered the burning and smoke filled house.

Mr Scanlon and the other men located the elderly resident, who was unresponsive. They carried her out of the house and to safety.

Emergency services arrived and the elderly woman was transported to hospital.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Rolf Ronny SEIDEL, Margaret River WA 6285

Mr Rolf Seidel is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from a burning truck near Northam, Western Australia on 11 October 2018.

At about 5pm, Mr Rolf Seidel was driving his truck along the Great Western Highway when a truck in front of him collided with a grain trailer and burst into flames.

Mr Seidel braked sharply to avoid hitting the two trucks, however part of his truck impacted with the truck in front. He got out and moved towards the truck in front where he saw the engine bay on fire. The dazed and injured driver was unable to extricate himself from the damaged cabin which began to fill with smoke.

The driver of the impacted grain trailer had sourced a fire extinguisher which he used on the spreading flames. Mr Seidel also retrieved a fire extinguisher from his truck which he used on the flames, reducing them slightly.

Mr Seidel then managed to jimmy open the door of the damaged truck and the men tried to undo the trapped driver's seatbelt without success.

By this time the entire left hand side of the truck was on fire. Mr Seidel used his pocket knife to cut the trapped driver's seat belt and, with the help of the other truck driver, dragged the injured man out of the smoke-filled cab and away to safety. The damaged truck was then engulfed in flames.

Emergency services arrived and took the driver to hospital for treatment.

Miss Jayla SMITH, Morangup WA 6083

Miss Jayla Smith is commended for brave conduct for her actions during the rescue of a young child in Swan View, Western Australia on 10 July 2018.

At about 4pm, Miss Jayla Smith, then aged 13 years, her four year old nephew and other family members were travelling on a bus on Talbot Road. When the bus stopped they got off and the toddler ran in front of the bus into the path of an oncoming truck.

Jayla hurried after the toddler, grabbing him by his jumper and tried to throw him out of the way. Instinctively she put her hands out to protect them as the truck collided with the pair, throwing them into the air.

Jayla and her young nephew landed on the road and were assisted by family and members of the public. Thankfully both were conscious with Jayla sustaining grazes and bruises, and her cousin a head fracture and broken arm.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Don SOTIROV, Watermans Bay WA 6020

Mr Don Sotirov is commended for brave conduct for his actions following the rescue of a woman from a house fire in Carine, Western Australia on 11 June 2020.

At around 7am, a person noticed that his neighbour's house was on fire. Believing that the elderly neighbour was inside the house he went to the burning residence and attempted to gain entry.

Mr Sotirov was passing the house when he saw the house was on fire. He went to assist, and he and the neighbour tried to enter the front of the house, but were forced back due to the intensity of the smoke and flames.

Another passer-by stopped to assist, and Mr Sotirov and the two men went to the rear of the house where they found all windows and doors were locked. They attempted to smash windows, but due to the double glazing they were unsuccessful. On locating a pick axe from a neighbouring residence, one of the men was able to smash a glass door and Mr Sotirov and the two men entered the burning and smoke filled house.

Mr Sotirov and the other men located the elderly resident, who was unresponsive. They carried her out of the house and to safety.

Emergency services arrived and the elderly woman was transported to hospital.

The late Mr Raymond Alfred ST JULIAN, Formerly of Lalor Park NSW 2147

Mr Raymond St Julian is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an altercation with an armed offender at Blacktown District Hospital, New South Wales on 27 August 2018.

In the late evening, Mr Raymond St Julian, a patient at Blacktown District Hospital, noticed another patient exhibiting erratic behaviour. The man had photographed staff, and entered several rooms of other patients speaking to them as though they were family members before being asked to leave.

The man then entered a staff room and picked up a bread knife and a kitchen knife. A nurse on duty followed the man into the kitchen where upon he lashed out at her with the knives, wounding her on the wrist, upper body and arm. The nurse began to scream.

On hearing the commotion, Mr St Julian, dressed only in a hospital gown, went to the assistance of the injured nurse. As the nurse escaped the room, he pulled the door to the room shut. The man made repeated threats of violence as he tried to open the door which was being held closed by Mr St Julian. The offender smashed at the door and continued to tug against it in order to escape.

Despite being of smaller build than the offender, and 72 years of age, Mr St Julian held the door shut until hospital security staff arrived and secured the armed offender.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Christopher SYKES, Abbotsford Vic 3067

Mr Christopher Sykes is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a woman from a burning house in Abbotsford, Victoria on 27 January 2019.

At about 2pm, Mr Christopher Sykes was at Victoria Park Oval when he heard a smoke alarm sounding and noticed smoke coming from a house nearby. A gas bottle attached to a barbeque had exploded and set the house on fire. He went over to the house where bystanders had gathered and were calling triple 0. He asked if there was anybody inside and was told there was an occupant.

He then heard a woman screaming from inside so he broke down the front door and entered the smoke filled house. When he was about 3 metres inside he called out and the woman responded from the back of the house. Hampered by thick smoke he instructed the woman to come to the front of the house.

When he saw the woman coming through the thick smoke he went further inside and led the woman outside to safety. Neighbours took the woman to a nearby house where she was given first aid for serious burns until emergency services arrived and took her to hospital.

Mr Clayton Allen THOMAS, Georges Hall NSW 2198

Mr Clayton Thomas is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident with an out of control car near Prospect, New South Wales on 28 November 2016.

At about 1pm, a man driving along the M4 motorway lost consciousness and his vehicle crashed into a safety barrier before cutting in front of, and colliding with, a garbage truck.

With its driver slumped over the wheel, the vehicle began to drive in circles in reverse across the motorway. Mr Clayton Thomas stopped his vehicle and went to assist. Together with the truck driver they approached the out of control vehicle as it continued to drive in circles.

Mr Thomas managed to get into the moving vehicle and jam open one of its doors, which allowed the truck driver to jump in and apply the handbrake, stopping its progress.

Mr Thomas and the truck driver continued to attempt to revive the driver until ambulance officers arrived at the scene and transported the unconscious man to hospital.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Alexander WATKISS, Warners Bay NSW 2282

Mr Alexander Watkiss is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a man from rough surf at Byron Bay, New South Wales on 11 March 2015.

In the afternoon, a swimmer at Byron Beach got into difficulties in strong surf conditions and signalled for help. The sky had become dark and it started to rain.

People on the beach noticed that the man was in difficulty and was now about 130 metres from shore. A surfboard and boogie board were sourced and Mr Alexander Watkiss and another man entered the choppy water and made their way out beyond the rough surf zone to the swimmer who was located. The swimmer, who was now having cramps in both legs, was able to grab onto one of the boards.

A third man, a police officer, swam to the group and the swimmer and the officer got onto the surfboard and began to head towards the shore. Mr Watkiss and the other man, sharing the boogie board, also began making their way back through the rough swell.

A lifesaver on a jetski arrived and took the fatigued swimmer back to shore. He then made two trips out to bring in Mr Watkiss and the police officer, while the other man paddled back to shore on the boogie board.

Senior Constable Scott Steuart WILSON, Queensland Police

Senior Constable Scott Wilson is commended for brave conduct for his actions during an incident with an armed offender in Mackay, Queensland on 30 May 2018.

In the afternoon, Senior Constable Scott Wilson, then a Constable, and two other officers were first on the scene in response to multiple triple 0 calls regarding a gunman in the Central Business District of Mackay. The offender, armed with multiple rifles, had walked up and down Gregory Street, discharging his weapons on several occasions. He then leant against a vehicle and pointed the gun towards his head.

Senior Constable Wilson and the other officers surrounded the gunman so as to prevent him from being near members of the public, and drew their service pistols. They directed him to drop his weapons, but he refused. Senior Constable Wilson, along with another officer, began to negotiate with the gunman and, after 20 minutes, police negotiators then spoke to the gunman via phone.

Despite knowing the offender's weapons were loaded, Senior Constable Wilson and the other officers stood their posts for approximately 50 minutes until the gunman placed his weapons on the ground and surrendered.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mr Craig ZULIAN, Balgownie NSW 2519

Mr Craig Zulian is commended for brave conduct for his actions during the rescue of a teenage surfer swept out to sea at North Wollongong, New South Wales on 30 January 2015.

In the evening, Mr Craig Zulian, a local surf lifesaver, was contacted by NSW Police Rescue to assist in the search for a 15 year old surfer, who had been swept out to sea in large surf at North Wollongong Beach.

Mr Zulian launched a jetski and, after two attempts, he managed to clear the breakers and head out in the rough seas. Despite the hazardous conditions and fading light he continued to look for the surfer. About a 100 metres from shore he saw a splash in the water and made his way over to the fatigued surfer who was close to drowning.

Mr Zulian lifted the teenager onto the jetski and held onto him as he headed towards Wollongong Harbour where emergency services were waiting to take the young man to hospital.