

	ACT Rural Fire Service Standard Operating Procedure 4.9 National Medal	4.9 Service Management
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Purpose

The National Medal is awarded for long and “*diligent service*” to ACT RFS members.

The Medal recognises long service in organisations that protect life and property with a minimum of 15 years diligent service being required for issuing of the National Medal. Clasps are available for each additional 10-year period of diligent service after that point.

ACT RFS Headquarters is responsible for ensuring all information on the nomination form is correct. The form will then be processed by staff within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JaCSD) and forwarded to the Honours Secretariat at Government House for final approval.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) defines the nomination process and protocols for the National Medal and the roles and responsibilities of all members.

Operating Procedure

History

The National Medal was established in 1975 as one of the first three elements of the Australian Honours System.

In 1997 the government commissioned a review of the National Medal. Two significant features were added:

- (a)** eligibility was extended to include members of qualifying Volunteer search and rescue groups and;
- (b)** provision was made for an individual’s service to be aggregated more easily across different qualifying organisations.

The new regulations were formally introduced on 18 June 1999 by Letters Patent.

Recipients of the National Medal have their name, date of award and the award provided to the Honours Secretariat in Canberra and posted on the awards data base at the website www.itsanhonour.gov.au

Award of the National Medal

The medal may be awarded to a person if that person has eligible service to the following organisations:

- a) Australian Police Forces; or
- b) Fire Services; or
- c) Ambulance Services; or
- d) Australian Emergency Services; or
- e) All of the above

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Service within any other organisation will not be counted toward the National Medal.

Eligible Service

A person has “*eligible service*” if throughout the period of their service the member has:

- a)** served **diligently** as a member of an Australian Fire Service on or after 14 February 1975.
- b)** served in a Service organisation for at least 15 years, or for periods, that in the aggregate, amount to at least 15 years.
- c)** during the period of service:
 - i.** maintained a level of training sufficient to fulfil the primary function of the service organisation;
 - ii.** maintained a level of physical fitness sufficient to fulfil the primary function of the service organisation;
 - iii.** performed, or been ready to perform the primary function of the service organisation; and
 - iv.** for the ACT RFS it is required that this service be completed as an active member.

Note: A clasp to the National Medal is not automatically awarded after the completion of each further period of ten years continuous service. The medal holder must be nominated to receive additional clasps for the National Medal.

For the purposes of determining eligibility for this award, a person has served the organisation “*diligently*” if, in the opinion of the ACT RFS Chief Officer (Chief Officer):

- (a)** the service given by the person has been *conscientious and of good standard*: and
- (b)** in the performance of the service, the person *showed good conduct as a member of the ACT RFS*.

Eligible service commences from 18 (eighteen) years of age, providing the member’s service meets the eligibility criteria above.

Eligible service as a junior member may be counted towards the National Medal, providing parent/guardian consent to join the service was obtained at the commencement of membership and the member’s service meets the eligibility criteria above.

Determination of “Length of Service”

Length of service will be calculated from a person’s anniversary date of commencement as a member of the ACT RFS.

Eligible service with an approved organisation, prior to service with ACT RFS, will be counted towards the National Medal.

If a member has a break(s) from the service, this time is not counted toward the awarding of the National Medal.

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The length of service for members who are seasonal or 'fire season only' rostered fire fighters will be recognised on a pro-rata basis. Meaning, only the season or rostered periods will count towards the member's total length of service.

Wearing of the Medal

The National Medal is worn on the left side of the uniform, 3mm above the left breast pocket, with the most senior award closest to the wearer's chest (heart).

Recipients of the National Medal must only wear the ribbon bars of other award(s) received while attending the National Medal Ceremony.

Further details on wearing the medal are available on the Honours Secretariat Website www.itsanhonour.gov.au.

Nominations

Who can be nominated?

All members of the ACT RFS are eligible to be nominated for the National Medal.

Members of the ACT RFS are defined as:

- a) All Volunteer and salaried members of Brigades (including Parks Brigade); and
- b) The ACT RFS Chief Officer and other Salaried members of the ACT RFS;

Who can nominate a member of the ACT RFS for a National Medal?

Any member of the ACT RFS may submit a nomination for the award of a National Medal through the Brigade Captain or Executive. Additionally, the ESA Commissioner can nominate a member of the ACT RFS, however, self-nominations will not be accepted.

How do I nominate a member of the ACT RFS for a National Medal?

Members of the ACT RFS must be nominated for a National Medal in line with the criteria set out in this SOP and using:

- (a) The prescribed Nomination Form (Attachment A),
- (b) The Privacy Statement (Attachment B) and
- (c) The Captain/Executive confirmation letter (Attachment C).

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A) Nomination Process for Volunteers

A nomination generated by a brigade member requires the endorsement of the Brigade Captain or Executive and in turn endorsement by the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer or delegate may seek further information to assist in the determination.

B) Nomination Process for Staff

A nomination generated by a staff member requires the immediate Supervisor's endorsement, and must be forwarded to the Chief Officer for endorsement. The Chief Officer or delegate may seek further information to assist in the determination.

How do I prepare a nomination?

The following details are required on each nomination:

- (a)** the nominee's full name (as per birth certificate) and contact details e.g. John William Ruckman;
- (c)** if prior recognition of service is required, a certified copy of their Certificate of Service from any other eligible organisation (as described in Eligible Service sections of this SOP);
- (d)** contact details of the person submitting the nomination;
- (e)** contact details of the person validating the nomination or who would be willing to provide a reference in support of the nomination;
- (f)** examples demonstrating diligent service and details of the nominee's service and significant achievements, worthy of recognition through the External Awards System.

Should further guidance be required, members should contact the Manager, Membership.

Are nominations confidential?

No, however all information provided in the application is strictly confidential and will only be used in considering the merits of each nomination.

The ACT RFS HQ will acknowledge receipt of a nomination for an award to the nominee.

If a nominated person does not receive an Award, then it can be assumed the nomination was unsuccessful. There will be no specific notification of an unsuccessful nomination.

Members of the ACT RFS may or may not accept a nomination and this will remain a matter between the Chief Officer, the nominated member and the Honours Secretariat.

What is the estimated timeframe for receiving this award?

As National Medals are externally issued, a *minimum of 4 months* is required to allow for the nomination to be processed.

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Cancellation and Reinstatement

The Governor General may cancel the Award of the National Medal or the clasp to the Medal and may restore the Award if cancelled. If an award is cancelled, the name of the person to whom the award was made shall be erased from the Honours Secretariat Register and the person must return the Medal to the Registrar at the Honours Secretariat. If an award previously cancelled is reinstated, the Registrar shall restore the entry in the Register that has been erased.

The Awards Ceremony

The National Medal is presented by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services or designated representative of the ACT RFS at a ceremony nominally held in November each year.

Maintained By: Manager Membership

Approved By: Andrew Stark

Position: Chief Officer RFS

Signature:

Date:

Cross Reference SOP/s:

Amendments: