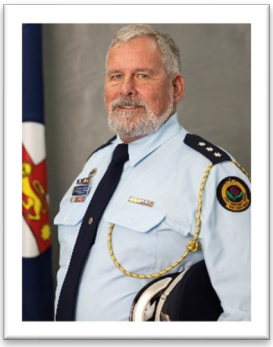
NSW State Emergency Service



Nominee's name: Garry Whitaker

Current Role: Deputy Local Commander, Hastings Cluster

Garry Whitaker has contributed over 53 years of outstanding volunteer service to the NSW State Emergency Service. As Deputy Local Commander of the Hastings Cluster, he supports four Units and provides leadership, coaching, and operational management during floods, storms, and tsunamis. He also plays a key role in mentoring emerging leaders across the region.

Garry's "service above self" includes deployments across NSW, Queensland, and internationally—most notably the 2023 Canadian wildfires. He has delivered ceremonial services, state-wide learning projects, and major disaster responses including Cyclone Yasi and the Newcastle Earthquake. His commitment to inter-agency collaboration and training is exemplary.

Beyond the SES, Garry has been deeply engaged in community service through Studio ARTES, Laurieton Men's Shed, and multiple honorary board roles. He has served as Deputy Mayor of Hornsby, supported programs for youth and disability support, and volunteered as a blood donor and community bus driver.

Garry also continues to serve in the NSW Rural Fire Service as a firefighter and chainsaw trainer, strengthening community safety across agencies. Highly respected for his compassion, professionalism, and lifelong dedication, Garry is a remarkable nominee for the RESCA, embodying the values of community service and leadership.