

# National medals honour firefighters' long service



Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes presents National Medal and Clasps to CALM's fire crew and staff in the Central Forest Region recently. Mrs Edwardes is pictured with Regional Manager Bob Chandler, Executive Director Syd Shea, fire crews Ed Haley, Keith Pears, Fred Myers, Bevan Foster and Brian Fitzgerald, and Bunbury MLA Ian Osborne. Photo by Paul Webster.

**MORE than 3,000 years of accumulated dedicated service to protecting Western Australians from the devastation of bushfires will be rewarded this year with presentations of National Medals to CALM fire crews, officers and support staff.**

Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes recently presented National Medals and Clasps to 47 CALM staff from the Central Forest Region.

A further 100 awards will be made to other staff from

CALM's Southern and Swan forest regions, the Wheatbelt, Goldfields and Mid-West regions.

The Medal is awarded for 15 years service; clasps are presented for each subsequent 10 years service.

Several CALM staff who were recognised today had given more than 33 years service to the Department's fire management and protection operations.

These included Brian Fitzgerald, Bevan Forster,

Keith Pears and Fred Myers from the Blackwood District and Edward Hally from South West Capes.

Mrs Edwardes said the awards were given to members of groups such as defence forces, police, ambulance services and fire agencies involved in protecting human life and community values.

#### **Risking personal safety**

"Consequently, a feature of the groups eligible for the National Medal is that their

work requires great skill, risks to personal safety, dedication and, perhaps most importantly, long-term commitment," she said.

Mrs Edwardes said there was an expectation in the community that lives and property would be protected from natural- and human-caused disasters by well-trained and disciplined emergency forces.

"However, CALM fire crews do far more than suppress wildfires," she said.

"They also are involved in

the Department's other activities such as nature conservation, wildlife management, tourism and recreation, timber harvesting and plantation development.

"The community therefore benefits from this wide range of expertise because CALM has integrated fire management with its other important business activities."

Mrs Edwardes said CALM's preventative and protection measures also contributed significantly to the State's econo-

my in terms of low levels of damage to natural resources and the replacement of service infrastructures and private property when inevitable wildfires occur.

She said CALM had worked with other State and Commonwealth agencies to develop a more integrated and systematic approach to managing smoke from prescribed burns. This was in line with the Government's policy to ensure WA had a high standard of air quality.

