

Focus on Volunteers

Gold category Volunteer Employer Recognition Award winner Andrew Alston with Commissioner Darren Klemm. Click on photo to watch the awards highlights. (<https://youtu.be/L5t21xi566g>)

Volunteer Employer Recognition Awards

In November 2018 a record 102 WA businesses were recognised through the Volunteer Employer Recognition Awards. We have more than 26,000 emergency services volunteers around the state and many juggle their volunteering commitments with their employment. The annual awards present an opportunity for us to thank our volunteers' employers for their support.

For the first time ever two award ceremonies were held in 2018, with the first in Perth on 2 November and the second in Busselton on 9 November.

Commissioner Darren Klemm attended both ceremonies and commended the business owners on their commitment to their staff and the community. He also praised the 26 self-employed volunteers, whose commitment can often mean their businesses are put on hold when an emergency occurs.

Landscaper Andrew Alston owns the Jardinier Garden Centre in Carnarvon and has been a volunteer firefighter for more than a decade. He said he was humbled to receive an award in the highest category.

"To be recognised in the gold category was not expected and I am proud my contribution has been recognised outside the communities I have helped," Andrew said.

Andrew's commitment has required him to take many hours away from his business for training and to attend incidents, which include large scale bushfires in the Gascoyne region, Harvey, Yarloop and Yalbalgo, multiple road crash rescues, structure fires and the response to Tropical Cyclone Olwyn.

"The recovery effort for Cyclone Olwyn ran for a week, which meant I had to close the business for that entire time. For smaller jobs the impact isn't as significant and my clients are sympathetic but for longer jobs the impact is far greater because I have to work weekends to catch up and that means more time away from my family."

The full list of award recipients can be found on our [website awards page](#).