

Mayor's Inspirational Award 2019

Australia Day Awards Ceremony - Wasleys

Good morning, my name is Mark Frankcom, councillor for Light Ward. I have the honour and privilege of presenting the next award on behalf of Mayor Bill O'Brien.

Standing here today, I feel confident in saying that everyone in this room was affected by the Pinery Bushfire, in one way or another. Whether you worked during the fire, assisted with recovery, were personally affected through loss of property or know someone that was affected. It was a catastrophic, life changing day for everyone involved and still affects people to this very day.

One of those people is Mr Terry Lee, who Mayor Bill recently awarded a Mayors Inspiration Award. Terry's recovery is truly inspiring and this was highlighted during Mayor Bills nomination. Terry is a worthy recipient of this award, congratulations.

What I would like to bring to everyone's attention is the little known story of how Terry was able to begin his recovery.

As some of you are aware, I am a serving police officer and until recently, was the officer in charge of the Kapunda Police Station. I was in Kapunda on the day of Pinery.

As a very quick background on policing, we renew our Emergency First Aid certificate annually and complete online bushfire training annually, that's it. We have no paramedic training and no fire fighter training. however, I can assure you that every police officer has attempted putting out a fire with a garden hose or fire extinguisher or performed first aid on a serious injury in an attempt to save someone's life, even when they know their efforts will likely be in vain.

Management tell us we're not fire fighters, to remain at our traffic points and to stay away from the fire front. Unfortunately for management, and for our families and friends, us police officers are wired a little bit differently to the average person and as a result, often find ourselves in the thick of it regardless of whether we're trained to be there or not. What can I say, the desire to help others and the enjoyment of those adrenaline dumps is in our DNA, I'm sure of it.

On the day of Pinery, BSgt David BYRNE, officer in charge of the Freeling police station and long time resident of Freeling, was at a traffic point at the intersection of Horrocks Hwy and Templar's Rd. Dave was Stopping and diverting traffic, a seemingly routine job for a police officer tasked to a fire, however, his day was about to turn anything but routine.

It all started when a vehicle stopped at Dave's traffic point and he was approached by a male with significant burns to his body. This male was in obvious distress, not only over his injuries but also because he was unable to contact an ambulance or find a safe route to a hospital. Rather than simply giving this male directions, Dave, because he's a police officer and a decent human being, put this male in his police vehicle and with red and blue lights flashing, took off towards the Angaston hospital. Dave decided the most direct route was through Freeling, then Daveyston and onto the Sturt highway. Unfortunately this was also the same route the devastating fire was taking.

After crossing the Thiele Hwy and onto Daveyston Rd, Dave saw something on the side of the road. There was a man standing next to a blackened figure on the ground. The figure resembled something similar to burnt tree debris. Unsure of what the man was looking at, Dave pulled over to the side of the

road to assist. Dave got out of his vehicle and what he quickly realised, and couldn't have expected, was this blackened debris was in fact a person, Terry Lee. Terry had significant burns to most of his body and was barely alive. Dave now recognised the man standing next to Terry as Freeling resident Steve Harris. Steve had found Terry on the side of the road, and in an extraordinary effort to soothe Terry's burns and reduce his pain, poured beer all over him. After ensuring the CFS hosed Terry down, Dave, again without hesitation, put Terry in his vehicle, next to the other injured male, and continued to the Angaston Hospital, still trailing the fire.

Terry was silent, the other male was screaming, there was fire all around, ripping through the Barossa and the traffic on the Sturt Highway was chaotic, yet Dave continued. While constantly reassuring his passengers, avoiding the flames and dodging the chaotic traffic, Dave continued to the hospital with red and blues still flashing. To this very day Dave still remembers the only words Terry spoke to him during that drive, don't crash copper. With a cool head and Terry's strong words of advice, Dave successfully delivered his passengers to the Angaston Hospital, undoubtably saving Terry's life and greatly assisting the other.

However, the Dave and Terry story doesn't finish there. After Pinery, Dave made multiple trips to the hospital and countless phone calls to check on the welfare of Terry and his family. And when Dave was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the South Australian police, Terry was there. They are now good mates, and for good reason.

Terry's recovery was extraordinary, and I'm not taking anything away from that, but Terry was only able to recover because of the extraordinary actions of BSgt David Byrne.

Dave is extremely humble and not one to seek recognition, so it is my absolute honour and privilege to present a Mayors Inspiration Award to a fellow police officer and my good friend, David Byrne.