



## BIG WEEK FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES IN DUBBO

Last week was an exciting one for the emergency services ranks in Dubbo with a number of announcements and openings taking place.

We had the privilege of Emergency Services Minister David Elliott coming to Dubbo. His first stop was an announcement of six additional Rural Crime Investigators for NSW as part of the first allocation of the government's 1500 extra police.

This group of officers are able to work with rural communities to prevent and solve crimes such as stock theft, illegal shooting and trespassing. These crimes are devastating for farmers and landholders, particularly when we are in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record.

After that announcement at the Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets, we headed out to the Dubbo City Regional Airport where we were able to officially open the Rural Fire Service Training Academy.

I have to say I wasn't prepared for just how amazing this facility is. Council oversaw the project build for the \$23 Million academy and they did a brilliant job. The exterior of the building looks impressive enough but when you step inside you realise just how incredible it is. With training rooms, offices, a large canteen and impressive kitchen facilities, it is unique for Dubbo.

There are also 30 dormitory style rooms, with two more 30-room blocks to be built in later stages. This will cater for more than 100 people who have come to Dubbo for training.

Our final stop of the day was just up from the RFS Training Academy and another part of the emergency service precinct that is at the airport.

The opening of the combined VRA/SES building was another very exciting moment. Both of these wonderful community organisations have been needing increased space and improved amenities. It makes perfect sense for the SES and VRA to train together and work together.

Particularly for the VRA, they had been dealing with a building that was too small, outdated, falling apart and simply no longer met their needs.

The new base has a shed that will accommodate their emergency vehicles and provide a workshop and storage area, while they will also have an office building that training rooms, meeting rooms, a kitchen and amenities. It will be a great place for them for years to come.

It's not often we get the chance to have so many exciting announcements in one day so that was a particular privilege to be part of.

During Minister Elliott's time in Dubbo, he revealed to me an interesting connection he has with our city.

It turns out he was the first academic to graduate here. Mr Elliott completed a Masters degree at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst. However he was unable to make his graduation ceremony and was advised he would have the opportunity to graduate at Dubbo instead.

It was the first graduation ceremony to be held at the Dubbo campus, and because he was completing a Masters, he was the first to receive his qualifications, making him the first academic of Dubbo.

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