



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

**Media Release**  
**23 June 2008**

### **STORM HEROES HONOURED IN PARLIAMENT**

Six members of the Newcastle-based Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service were today recognised in the Federal Parliament after receiving an international bravery award for their role in the rescue of 22 crew from the stranded Pasha Bulker during last year's June long weekend storms.

Minister for Transport Anthony Albanese and Leader of the Nationals Warren Truss offered bipartisan thanks on behalf of the Federal Parliament to the Rescue Helicopter Crew.

On Friday night, the six crew members were issued with Certificates of Commendation by the International Maritime Organisation, following their nomination by the Australian Government for these prestigious international bravery awards.

"This month our community has been commemorating the events of the storm a year ago," Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said today.

"The crew's commendations show the international significance of those events, and put our Rescue Service up there with the best in the world."

"The commendations are an appropriate recognition of the bravery, skill and professionalism shown by the Rescue Helicopter crew."

"Our community is rightly proud of their efforts in saving 22 lives that day from great danger, and I join with all Novocastrians in thanking them."

The six recipients are:

- Captain Ian McFadden and Captain Ian Osborne (Pilots),
- Graham Nickisson (Crew Chief),
- Peter Praniess (Aircrewman), and
- Glen Ramplin and Nathan Langham (Rescue Crewmen).

Transcripts of the Parliamentary statements follow.

**Canberra**  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Ph: 02 6277 4221  
Fax: 02 6277 8461



**Newcastle**  
427 Hunter Street  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300  
Ph: 02 4926 1555  
Fax: 02 4926 1895  
[www.sharongrierson.com](http://www.sharongrierson.com)



## Sharon Grierson MP

Federal Member for Newcastle

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government) (3.24 pm)—On indulgence, Mr Speaker: I am pleased to inform the House that six Australians, late on Friday night London time, were honoured with a prestigious international commendation for their involvement in the rescue of 22 crew members from the *Pasha Bulker*, which was stranded off Newcastle's Nobbys Beach in June 2007. Following nomination by the Australian government, over the weekend the International Maritime Organisation awarded these six fine Australians certificates citing acts of bravery. I had the honour of ringing the recipients on Friday night, and these humble men said that they were just doing their job. But, of course, they were doing much more than that. I know that the member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, is particularly proud of these fine men, as she should be, as the other members from the Hunter are and as all Australians will be.

The six recipients are Captain Ian McFadden and Captain Ian Osborne, pilots; Graham Nickison, crew chief; Peter Praniess, aircrewman; and Glen Ramplin and Nathan Langham, rescue crewmen. During the rescue, the hoisting cable was blowing up to 30 feet rearward of the aircraft, making hoisting extremely difficult. On two occasions, aircrewman Nickison was thrown from the doorway of the helicopter, relying on his safety lanyard as he hovered 50 feet above the deck and dropped 20 feet due to strong winds. During hoisting, waves often broke at the base of the ship, sending sea spray up to 60 feet high, covering the aircraft and crew. According to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the national search and rescue coordinator, it was the biggest airlift from a bulk carrier in recent Australian maritime history. The courage and commitment of rescue workers often goes unnoticed; I am very pleased that on this occasion it has not. I am sure that, along with the shadow minister, all members of the House would like to pass on their congratulations and thanks to these fine men for putting their own lives at risk so that others might be saved.

**Mr TRUSS** (Wide Bay—Leader of the Nationals) (3.26 pm)—On indulgence, Mr Speaker: I am happy to associate the opposition with the words of congratulation from the Leader of the House. This was a very public event, telecast into the homes of Australians every night for quite some period of time. We do indeed take our hats off to those who were visibly and actively involved in this rescue mission. It was in very dangerous circumstances, with cyclonic conditions and high winds. Of course, any helicopter rescue of this nature is dangerous, but this one had extra hazards associated with it because of the dangerous conditions. It reminds us all of how important our volunteer and professional rescue authorities are and how much we depend upon them in times of crisis. These six Australians have been specifically honoured, and we congratulate them, but we also pay tribute to the many other Australians who are prepared to give their time voluntarily and to risk their own lives in times of danger for their fellow countrymen.

Canberra  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Ph: 02 6277 4221  
Fax: 02 6277 8461



Newcastle  
427 Hunter Street  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300  
Ph: 02 4926 1555  
Fax: 02 4926 1895  
[www.sharongrierson.com](http://www.sharongrierson.com)