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VicForests' staff recognised for bravery

VicForests' staff were part of a group who received bravery awards after rescuing campers threatened by the Black Saturday bushfires.

Ray Mackey and Jarrod Logue, along with staff from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, were recognised with a Group Bravery Citation as part of the Australian Bravery Decorations.

Mr Mackey, from VicForests' Healesville office, said the award was a great thing for everybody involved in the rescue.

"It was a surprise to be nominated and to receive an award has made my family very proud," Mr Mackey said.

"Our team went to the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve on Black Saturday and we were in the process of evacuating about 20 campers when the fire crossed the road, trapping us in the forest.

"The group included families and children and we spent a number of hours in the river as the fire burnt the hills on either side.

"It was a very intense experience until the fire front finally passed and we were able to escape," he said.

Jarrold Logue, Harvesting Forester with VicForests, said the team was simply doing what was required in the difficult circumstances.

"A lot of people faced dangerous situations on that day, so to receive an award really was a pleasant surprise," Mr Logue said.

"I'm sure other people would have done exactly what we did if they found themselves in the same place at the time."

Mr Logue said a large number of VicForests' staff and contractors played an important role in fighting the Black Saturday fires.

"There is an enormous amount of fire experience within VicForests, particularly when it comes to dealing with high intensity bushfires," he said.

"This knowledge of fire behaviour, and the on ground role played by our contractors working in the forests, is vital in protecting the community."

Mr Logue has had another reason to celebrate recently following the birth of his second child, a baby girl, only two weeks ago.

"We haven't had a lot of time to think about the award in the last fortnight!" he said.

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