Medals lost in blaze re-gifted

By KONNOR FURBER

RURAL Fire Service firefighter Rob Doyle was truly moved when the Atherton fire crew re-gifted him with medals and certificates he lost in a house fire earlier this year.

Mr Doyle had one heck of a bad week in June – finding out his house in Ravenshoe had burnt down while he was in hospital for cancer treatment the day before his birthday.

So the crew at the Atherton Fire Department wanted to do something to help out the local who has been with the Rural Fire Service for the past 35 years.

They managed to find out which medals and certificates he had lost and new ones were sent up from the headquarters in Brisbane.

Mr Doyle was taken aback from their gesture, saying it was really nice what they had done for him.

"It's nice, it really is. I didn't expect them to do something like this for me," he said.

Mr Doyle also said he was still touched with the help he received from the Ravenshoe community following the fire.

"I was quite overwhelmed with the community response, who did the fundraising activity to help me out. I'd like to put a good thank you out for that one – there's a lot of good people out there," he said.

The mild-mannered and much-loved member of the community was able to make light of the situation, despite still missing some of the things he lost.

"I needed to downsize, but I didn't really need to downsize that badly," he joked.

"I mean, I miss my house. I was there 40-odd years and brought up five kids, so there's a lot of memories there.

"And there are certain things in the house that I miss. The certificates and medals were one of them – it wasn't just the fire ones. It was a couple of quiet achiever awards from the council, a scout award, and some St Vinnies awards.

"And a few other little things that were in there. I had a rice paper version of the Lord of the Rings – all three books in a book that thick," he said, measring a couple of inches with his fingers.

"And my old vinyl record collection from the 60s and 70s. Those are the sorts of things you can't replace. But other than that, it's all just stuff."

Mr Doyle said his health has improved, undergoing his first round of chemotherapy nearly five years ago and his second last year, although he is still getting treatment.

"When I woke up in the ICU, the surgeon come around and he said, 'You must be a tough old bucket because it would have rolled most people'," he said with a smile.

Area Commander, Tablelands Command, Fire and Rescue QFD Brad Fleming said it was great to know the fire department had given back to someone who'd given a lot to them.

"It's good to be able to give back to our guys and girls for things like this," he said.

"There's obviously things we can't replace but it's the least we could do for the amount of time he's put in to the job. It's a good positive from a negative outcome."



Members of the Atherton Fire Department were excited to gift Rob Doyle (middle) with his medals and certificates.

PCYC lease gives green light

AN 'in-prinicple' agreement to grant a freehold lease to Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) Queensland at 68-70 Constance St has been formalised, paving the way for the construction and operation of a new facility for Mareeba's youth.

Mareeba Shire Council approved the agreement at its November ordinary meeting, following several negotiations throughout the year.

In May 2025, the council resolved to provide 'in-principle' consent to the granting of a freehold lease at a peppercorn rental consideration, for a minimum term of 30 years.

This was provisional on PCYC Qld having sufficient funds to construct and operate a new facility. (It had already received seed funding of $5 million in 2023 from the State Government.)

By July PCYC representatives had attended council chambers to present draft plans and confirm funding arrangements.

By September, a material change of use application to council revealed the new building plans which described a community-run facility with indoor and outdoor sports areas, including for pickleball and basketball.

The club would include a "youth space", offices, a car park and would "act as a social club ... with a youth focus".

Council had supported the MCU on the proviso that PCYC kept to a schedule that ensured the building would be completed by the end of 2026, otherwise the lease offer would lapse.

In the meantime, the PCYC has had its current lease at 136 Walsh Street renewed until then.

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