

2026 South Taranaki Community Awards

Hāwera Volunteer Fire Brigade

Organisation Volunteer Award

There is a quiet promise made across Te Hāwera.

From the streets of Hāwera to the surrounding farms, settlements and highways, there is an unspoken certainty that when someone's world is turned upside down, someone will come.

When smoke darkens the sky.

When twisted steels holds someone captive.

When a heart falters.

When storms leave destruction in their wake.

When fear replaces hope.

Someone will come.

That promise is kept by the more than 50 volunteers of the Hāwera Volunteers Fire Brigade.

In 2025 they answered that promise 358 times. By the time this nomination is being considered in 2026, they have already responded to more than 180 emergencies. Yet no statistics can truly capture their service, because it isn't measured only in callouts. It is measured in sacrifice.

It is the family meal left to go cold.

The warm bed abandoned at two in the morning.

The school prizegiving quietly slipped away from.

The birthday paused.

The shower interrupted.

The lawnmower left running.

The pager sounds.

The tones fall.

Life pauses.

Boots go on.

And they come.

They come to fires, crashes, rescues, medical emergencies, storm damage and alarms that, thankfully, become nothing more than reassurance.

They come without knowing what waits beyond the appliance doors.

Only knowing that someone, somewhere in Te Hāwera, needs them.

Behind every response are 44 brigade training nights each year, specialist courses, endless practical scenarios and countless hours of learning. They volunteer those hours willingly, because when the community needs them, “good enough” simply isn’t good enough.

Their service reaches far beyond emergencies. They stand alongside their community at school visits, open days, public events and local initiatives, quietly building trust, educating future generations and strengthening the communities they proudly call home.

They do not volunteer for recognition.

They volunteer because they believe that when the worst day of someone else’s life arrives, no one should face it alone.

Three hundred and sixty-five days a year.

Twenty-four hours a day.

Whenever the tones fall, they rise.

Not for medals.

Not for applause.

But for neighbours.

For strangers.

For Te Hāwera.

Some people wear a uniform.

The volunteers of the Hāwera Volunteer Fire Brigade wear a promise.

And time and time again, they keep it!