

ITEM 5.1 MAYORAL MINUTE - RHODES FIRE BRIGADE 100TH ANNIVERSARY**Reporting Manager** Deputy Mayor**Attachments:** Nil**BACKGROUND**

In March I was honoured to attend the centenary celebrations for the Rhodes Fire Brigade at the Rhodes Community Centre, and I wish now to extend my congratulations to the Brigade and all who serve currently and have served our community over the past century.

Now 101 years old, the Brigade was finally able to mark their centenary this year after COVID-19 lockdowns prevented formal celebrations last year.

On the 11th of March 1921, Rhodes Fire Brigade was inaugurated in response to fires at local timer mills and the arrival of Tulloch Ironworks and Berger paints.

Initially, it was a volunteer brigade led by Captain Charles McIlwaine, who offered a suitable shed at the rear of his property at 27 Blaxland Road. The first major fire attended was in February 1927 when a timber boat caught fire near the boat ramp at the end of Blaxland Road.

In 1933 they received a motorised fire appliance to support their work during a time when the chemical industry was growing. In 1967 an explosion rocked the whole of Rhodes caused by a significant fire at the Union Carbide Plant. The Brigade was confronted with a building and surrounding tanks of chemicals alight and worked to prevent a major disaster.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the 101-year history is the family legacy of the Brigade. The current Station Commander is Captain Gregory McIlwaine – grandson of the founding Brigade Captain Charles McIlwaine. It is this family and community tradition that makes the Brigade's history special and unique.

Over its storied history, the Rhodes Fire Brigade has consistently served and assisted our local community and I ask Council to join me in congratulating the Rhodes Fire Brigade on this important occasion, to thank them for their important service to our community and to wish them well for the next 100 years.

MOTION

That Council congratulate the Rhodes Fire Brigade for their centenary of service.
