



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Australia's leading experts share their bush fire emergency experience

**16 May 2018**

Emergency management and community engagement experts from across Australia will gather at Coffs Harbour this weekend to discuss best practice and share their experience about helping people prepare for bush fire emergencies and other natural disasters.

More than 450 practitioners will attend the 19<sup>th</sup> Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness (ACEFA) conference, hosted by the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS), which will include insights on how fire agencies engage with school, farming and indigenous communities.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said sessions would also provide practical information about public information and warnings, bush fire risk management and engagement in operations, which delegates would convey to their local brigades.

“A community that is both well informed and prepared is critical to saving lives, preventing injury and minimising property loss, which is why it is so important to engage with people to make sure they have timely and relevant advice and support,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“One of our most valuable assets in achieving this are the 73,000 local NSW RFS volunteers who connect with residents every day, and who provide the information and guidance that helps residents understand bush fire risk and what they can do to minimise that risk.

“This conference will help leaders across all fire agencies and other emergency services better understand how to engage with communities and pass that information on, which will ultimately help residents better prepare for and protect themselves against the very real threat of bush fire.”

Experts from organisations including the Victorian Country Fire Authority, Tasmania Fire Service, South Australian Country Fire Service, University of Sydney and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience will share their knowledge during sessions and workshops

The conference's seven keynote speakers include the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre and University of Wollongong's Dr Josh Whittaker, who will discuss key learnings from the 2017 bush fire season, and indigenous rugby international and marketing executive Mr Mark Ella AM, who will speak about his community and journey.

The ACEFA conference will be held from 17-19 May at the Coffs Harbour Opal Cove Resort and is sponsored by the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on (02) 9898 1855.  
For current incidents or major fire updates visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)