



Adam Marshall MP
Member for Northern Tablelands
Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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SOD-TURN MARKS BEGINNING OF \$6M NEW ENGLAND FIRE CONTROL CENTRE PROJECT

By the end of August diggers will have replaced planes at the northern end of Armidale Regional Airport, with Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall today joining NSW Rural Fire Service Chief Superintendent, Jayson McKellar to turn the first ceremonial sod and commence construction on the **\$6 million** NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) New England Fire Control Centre (FCC).

Mr Marshall said the significant development will allow the FCC to move from its outdated facility on Mann Street.

“To date **\$1.7 million** has been allocated by the State Government to get the co-location of the NSW RFS’ FCC, Aviation Airbase and Logistics Brigade airborne,” Mr Marshall said.

“With enough space to accommodate a full Incident Management Team of more than 10 people, the Armidale Airport FCC will be equipped with the very best digital mapping and communication capabilities.

“In May, the project management team, which includes Public Works Advisory, NSW RFS and Armidale Regional Council, met to discuss the final approved DA.

Chief Supt McKellar said the new facility will provide state of the art facilities to support District staff and volunteers during incidents and day-to-day needs.

“This brand new, first class building will provide a tremendous boost to the Armidale District members in the North Eastern Area, one of seven NSW RFS areas across the state, as well as the local community.”

Chief Supt McKellar said NSW RFS members are committed to helping their communities 24 hours a day, seven days a week and this new facility, together with the support that staff give, will assist them to carry out the important work that the community is proud of and grateful for.

The New England District covers 44 brigades and over 1,000 volunteer members over 1.8 million hectares of land.

“I would also like to recognise former New England RFS District Manager Steve Mepham, for the huge amount of hard work he put in to the planning of this project.

“Having a modern control centre located both at Armidale and Glen Innes will allow for a more cohesive firefighting effort and hopefully a greater protection of property and lives,” Chief Supt McKellar said.

Mr Marshall said the shortcomings of the existing Armidale FCC on Mann Street were highlighted during the 2019/2020 'Black Summer' bushfire event.

"A lack of space and adequate technology meant that major fire response had to be coordinated from Glen Innes Fire Control Centre," he said.

"This was in no way ideal when the majority of aerial firefighting operations were taking-off from Armidale Airport.

"The airport was also the arrival site for interstate support personnel, who then had to be transported 100 kilometres up the New England Highway to Glen Innes for deployment.

"While the Mann Street FCC has served the community for many years, with the increasing frequency and ferocity of bushfires it is too small and lacks the equipment to successfully manage significant blazes.

"The new FCC will eradicate these unnecessary and time-consuming logistical issues in future and facilitate the swift deployment of assets during major fire events," Mr Marshall said.

MEDIA: Kris Wall 0447 432 392