



Troy Grant
Minister for Police
Minister for Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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EMERGENCY SERVICES URGE COMMUNITIES TO STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER

The state's emergency services have joined forces to urge communities across the state to have a safe summer as the season kicks off tomorrow.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Troy Grant was joined by agency heads this morning to issue the reminder, with road safety, fire risks and proper precautions on our waterways all highlighted as key concerns when the temperatures soar.

"Aussie summers are absolutely iconic so what we're focused on is making sure people take some simple steps to ensure their festive season is memorable for all the right reasons," Mr Grant said.

"Whether you're hitting the road to go and see loved ones this Christmas, or enjoying some fun in the sun on one of our beautiful beaches, we want everyone to do so safely.

"At the same time, we're reminding people to make sure they've prepared their homes for the bushfire season, and know what to do if they're affected by floods or storms."

NSW Police Force Metropolitan Field Operations Deputy Commissioner Jeff Loy said police will be out in force over the summer targeting speeding, drink-driving, and those who choose to disobey the law.

"All motorists have a responsibility to obey the road rules - drivers need to pay attention to the road, put their mobile phones out of reach, not drink before getting behind the wheel and ensure the safety of themselves and their passengers," Deputy Commissioner Loy said.

NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons as well as Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner Paul Baxter reminded the community to adopt proper fire precautions this summer – whether that is taking care around the family BBQ or preparing for bush fires.

"Already this season the RFS have seen more than 6,000 fires, which start easily and spread quickly, so it is important to have a bush fire survival plan," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"Having a five minute discussion could actually save you and your family this bush fire season, so please, ask your friends, ask your family, and ask yourself: How Fireproof is Your Plan?"

NSW Surf Life Saving CEO Steve Pearce alongside representatives from Marine Rescue NSW, Westpac Life Saver Helicopter and Royal Life Saving NSW also spoke this morning about the importance of water safety – whether you're visiting the beach, heading out on a boat, rock fishing or swimming in your backyard pool this summer.

Mr Pearce reminded beachgoers to swim at a patrolled beach this summer, and always do so between the red and yellow flags.

“Each summer our lifesavers respond to many coastal drownings. Most are away from a patrolled location or after patrol hours, so make sure you learn how to spot and avoid rip currents, and don’t overestimate your abilities in the surf,” Mr Pearce said.

State Emergency Service Commissioner Mark Smethurst and Volunteer Rescue Association Commissioner Mark Gibson also spoke this morning about severe weather, with the summer storm season seeing the likelihood of storms increase.

“Trimming overhanging trees and branches, cleaning gutters and downpipes, checking your roof is in good repair, and securing and putting away loose items can make a big difference when severe weather strikes, reducing the chance of costly damage and potential injury,” Commissioner Smethurst said.

Mr Grant said while we want communities to focus on having a safe and fun summer, it is also important to get ready in case a fire, flood or storm affects your neighbourhood.

“Our emergency services do a tremendous job protecting lives, property and infrastructure across the state all year round, but we can all play our part in being prepared,” Mr Grant said.

Getting ready this summer includes five simple steps:

1. Know your risk - think about the area you live in and the types of disasters that could affect you;
2. Plan now for what you will do - sit down and talk with your family and plan for what you will do if a disaster affects your area;
3. Get your home ready - prepare your home by doing general home maintenance and checking your insurance;
4. Be aware - find out how to prepare and what to do if there is a disaster in your area; and,
5. Look out for each other - share information with your family, friends, neighbours and those who may need assistance.

You can learn more about getting ready this summer by visiting www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/getready

MEDIA: Brooke Eggleton | 0437 472 455