



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

A dramatic photograph of a firefighter in silhouette, wearing a helmet and gear, positioned in a forest at night. The scene is filled with falling sparks and embers, illuminated by a bright orange fire in the background. The firefighter is looking towards the right side of the frame.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

© State of New South Wales through the NSW Rural Fire Service 2014

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) encourages the availability, dissemination and exchange of public information. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this material for personal, in-house or non-commercial use, on the condition that you include the copyright notice "© State of New South Wales through the NSW Rural Fire Service" [plus year of creation or first publication] on all such uses. In the event that you wish to copy, distribute, display, download, store, or use this material for a purpose other than personal, in-house or non-commercial use, you must obtain permission from the NSW RFS by writing to the following address:

Commissioner
NSW Rural Fire Service
Locked Mail Bag 17
Granville NSW 2142

You must also obtain permission from the NSW RFS if you wish to:

- charge others for access to the work (other than at cost);
- include all or part of the work in advertising or a product for sale;
- modify the material; or
- use any trade mark from this publication, including the NSW Rural Fire Service crest or MyRFS logo.

Disclaimer Statement

While the material within this publication is current at the time of writing changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the material. Individuals are responsible for ensuring they have the most current version of this publication.

The information and material contained herein is general in nature and is intended for your use and information. The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) disclaims, to the extent permitted by law, all warranties, representations or endorsements, express or implied, with regard to the material contained herein. The NSW RFS does not warrant or represent that the material contained herein is free from errors or omissions, or that it is exhaustive. Users should exercise their own skill and care with respect to its uses. You must not assume that this material will be suitable for the particular purpose that you had in mind when using it.

The NSW RFS disclaims any liability (including but not limited to liability by reason of negligence) to the users of the material for any loss, damage, cost or expense whether direct, indirect, consequential or special, incurred by, or arising by reason of, any person using or relying on the material and whether caused by reason of, any error, omission or misrepresentation in the material or otherwise. Users of the Website will be responsible for making their own assessment of the material and should verify all relevant representations, statements and information with their own professional advisers.

FRONT PAGE: 3pm, 17 October 2013 Bells Line of Road, Dargan: Strong winds showering firefighters with embers.
Photo by Wolter Peeters Courtesy of Fairfax Media

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	2
Chapter Two: Management and Governance	17
Chapter Three: Summary Review of Operations	25
Chapter Four: Key Focus Areas	31
Chapter Five: Financial Tables	47
Chapter Six: Appendices	103
Glossary	143
Index	144

Letter to the Minister

The Hon Stuart Ayres, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting to you for presentation to Parliament the Annual Report of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) for the year ended 30 June 2014.

The 2013/14 bush fire season, and particularly the October 2013 bush fires, were the most difficult, dangerous and destructive fires NSW has experienced in more than a decade.

While the events of October 2013 quite rightly received significant attention, the work of our people is year-round, working with and preparing our communities. Important work has been done and has been highlighted throughout this report.

Throughout the reporting period, the Service has performed well against the NSW 2021 Goal 28 targets including meeting targets for hazard reduction works despite adverse weather conditions, Neighborhood Safer Places and the successful continuation of the Secondary Schools Cadet Program.

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*, the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001* and the *Public Disclosures Act 1994*.

Yours sincerely



Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM
NSW RFS Commissioner

Commissioner's Report

I have never been more proud of the NSW RFS volunteers and staff than in the 2013/14 season.

Bush fires threatened many communities across the season and indeed hundreds of homes were destroyed. Despite the extreme conditions, our members again proved themselves to be the very best firefighters in the world.

October 2013 was one of the most significant fire emergencies our State has experienced for many years. The response from our members, our emergency management partners and the community at that time was nothing short of remarkable.

In the four weeks of October, firefighters attended 1,167 bush and grass fires across NSW. This included significant fires in the Southern Highlands, Hawkesbury, Hunter, Port Stephens, Central Coast, Greater Lithgow and the Blue Mountains. In the Blue Mountains region, a number of large and destructive fires impacted on Springwood and Winmalee, Mount Victoria, and communities along the Bells Line of Road, destroying homes and affecting infrastructure.

The two weeks between 13 and 26 October 2013 were the most intense for fire activity with 627 incidents and 164,054 hectares burnt. In that period there were 11 days with Total Fire Ban, 19 section 44 emergency declarations, and a State of Emergency was declared by the Premier between 20-30 October 2013.

Thousands of firefighters were deployed, ready to respond. Nearly 100 aircraft were in action in the skies, assisting the crews on the ground. Behind the scenes, a massive logistics effort was in swing, such as a base camp set up in Penrith for 850 firefighters and the Major Incidents Logistics Support team which managed the participation of around 1,400 interstate firefighters.

Sadly, the fire emergency did bring tragedy with the death of David Black, a pilot in a contracted aircraft who died west of Ulladulla on the South Coast, while engaged in firefighting and Walter



Linder, a community member who suffered a heart attack while defending his property at Lake Munmorah.

Even before the October fires, the NSW RFS had been busy especially in Region North and Region East, responding to 2,322 fires in August and September. Another spate of fires occurred in January 2014 numbering 2,052.

The 2013/14 fire season also set a new record for the demand for public information. The NSW RFS website recorded 5.7 million visitors and 14.1 million page views during the two week period in October. The Service's innovations and attention on social media has continued to prove to be very effective. In 2013/14 the Service launched the MyFirePlan smartphone application to assist the community in developing Bush Fire Survival Plans.

Before the fire season began, weather forecasters were predicting a dry and windy summer. The Service's investment in hazard reduction and community preparedness meant the Service was well prepared for a difficult season.

In August and September brigades were working with partner agencies on over 100 scheduled hazard reductions each week. Several of these hazard reduction works proved to be vital in saving life and property when the fire season got underway.

Hazard reduction work continued throughout the reporting period despite adverse weather conditions in the prime hazard reduction period of

March to May. Of the 8,962 proposed hazard reduction activities, 71.5 percent were completed.

A record was also set for new member applications. In the 2013/14 period the Service welcomed a staggering 6,408 new members. In December 2013 the Service released the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Kit to support brigades in their recruitment efforts. Informal feedback from the brigades is that it has proved very useful.

The Service formalised its governance arrangements through the development and endorsement of a Corporate Governance Statement in the reporting period. The statement provides an overview of NSW RFS key Corporate Governance components including the planning and reporting process, risk management, the committee's structure, the Audit and Risk Committee, Internal and External Audits, Policy and Service Standard framework, ethics encompassing the Code of Conduct, financial management and delegation arrangements and a stakeholder engagement plan.

The One NSW RFS Communications and Engagement Strategy was successfully rolled out in the reporting period. The Strategy sets out a consistent and professional approach to internal and external communications. A toolkit of easy-to-use templates equips all members to produce effective and standardised communications for their local communities.

The upgrade of the Private Mobile Radio (PMR) and Paging networks continued this year and is due to completion in the next reporting period. This major project represents a total investment of some \$50m into radio and paging systems, network and architecture. The addition of this digital radio architecture is vital in ensuring volunteer firefighters have the latest and most reliable communication capabilities.

The Bush Fire Resilience for Aboriginal Communities Stage Two is in its second year and is progressing very well across the 34 identified Indigenous communities. The project runs primarily in remote areas and in the reporting period 25 Neighbourhood Safer Places were

identified for the remote communities. Of those communities deemed to have extreme risk, 90 percent have been treated and had hazard reduced with further worked planned. The project is dramatically improving rapport between the Aboriginal community and the NSW RFS.

In response to the bush fires in both January 2013 and October 2013, State Government announced an \$8.2 million package for the NSW RFS in June 2014. The package included improvements to the NSW RFS website, Bush Fire Information Line, ICT systems and ICON, Bush Fire Behaviour and Building Impact Assessment teams, and the enhancement of the Rapid Aerial Response Team program.

I would like to express my gratitude to Hon. Stuart Ayres, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and former Hon. Minister Michael Gallacher MLC, for their support of the Service and our members. Thank you also to Vicki D'Adam, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry for Police & Emergency Services.

As I said quite publicly at the time of the October emergency, I believe we have the best firefighters in the world. The coordinated firefighting arrangements in NSW, led by the NSW RFS, where the NSW RFS, Fire & Rescue NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation work as a team, is something we should all be proud of. We should also be proud of the relentless professionalism and commitment demonstrated by all during this time.



Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM
NSW RFS Commissioner

NSW Rural Fire Service Vision and Mission

To provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.

To protect the community and our environment we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community education, prevention and operational capability.

Values

- > mutual respect
- > adaptability and resourcefulness
- > one team, many players, one purpose
- > integrity and trust
- > support, friendship, camaraderie
- > community and environment
- > knowledge and learning

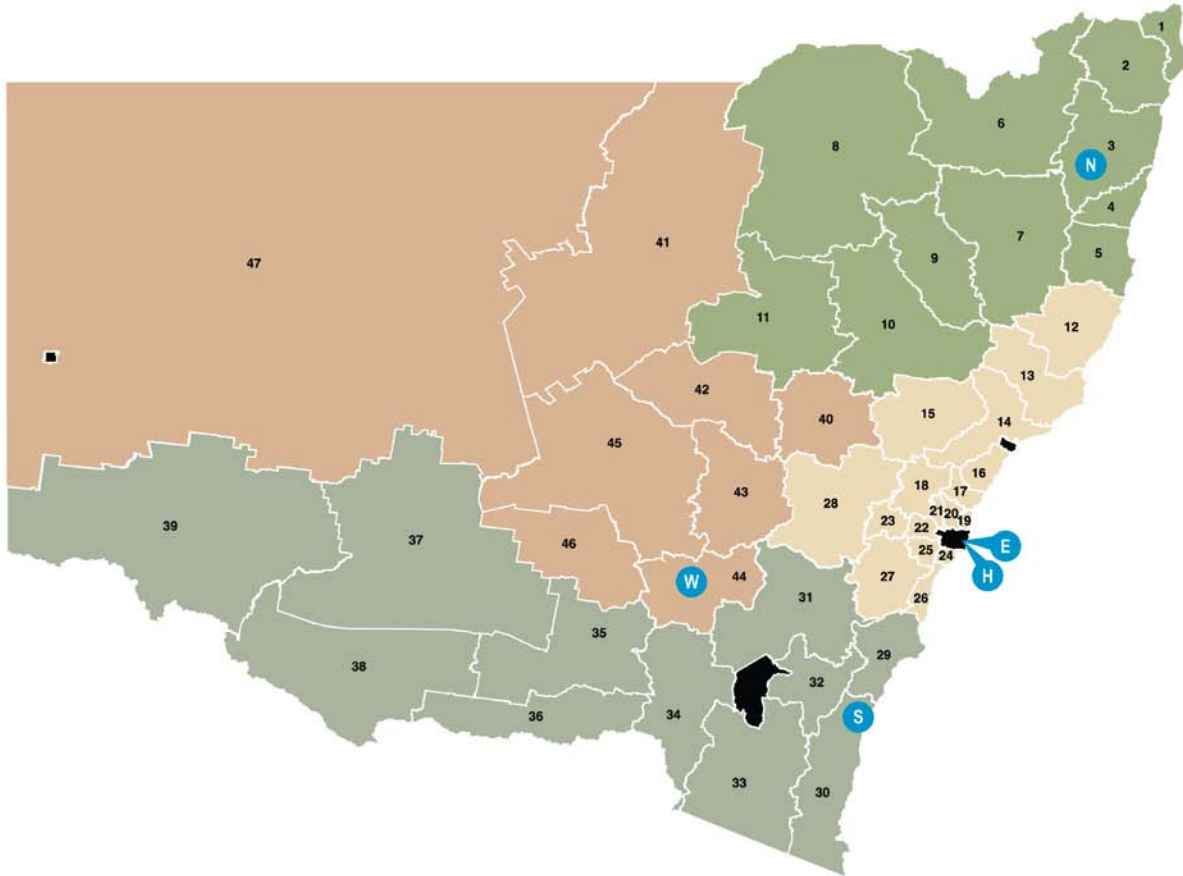
Customers

- > The people of NSW
- > Our members

Stakeholders

- > Community
- > Our members
- > Planners and developers
- > Media
- > Minister for Police and Emergency Services
- > Ministry for Police and Emergency Services (MPES)
- > Department of Justice
- > Members of Parliament – State and Federal
- > LGNSW and local councils
- > Other State and Territory Governments
- > Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA)
- > NSW RFS member representative groups
- > Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC)
- > Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC
- > Consultative committees (Community Engagement, Membership Services, Regional Services, Infrastructure Services and Operational Services)
- > Emergency Service peak groups
- > Insurance industry
- > Tourism industry groups
- > Peak industry groups
- > NGOs and service providers
- > Other government authorities
- > Employers of volunteers
- > Other associations (Farmers Association, Country Women's Association etc)

NSW RFS Districts 2013/14



H: Headquarters

15 Carter Street, Lidcombe

N: Region North

Level 4, State Office Block, Victoria Street, Grafton

S: Region South

7-9 Kylie Crescent, Batemans Bay

E: Region East

42 Lamb Street, Glendenning

W: Region West

3/21 Lovell Street, Young

*Office hours at all locations: 0845hrs-1700hrs,
Monday to Friday*

Totals	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
District Offices	47	48	48
Brigades	2,053	2,031	2,036

Key to NSW RFS Districts Map as 30 June 2014

Region North

1. Far North Coast

Ballina
Byron
Tweed

2. Northern Rivers

Kyogle
Lismore
Richmond Valley

3. Clarence Valley

4. Mid North Coast

Bellingen
Coffs Harbour

5. Lower North Coast

Kempsey
Nambucca

6. Northern Tablelands

Glen Innes Severn
Inverell
Tenterfield

7. New England

Armidale Dumaresq
Guyra
Uralla
Walcha

8. Namoi / Gwydir

Gwydir
Moree Plains
Narrabri

9. Tamworth

10. Liverpool Range

Gunnedah
Liverpool Plains
Upper Hunter

11. Castlereagh

Gilgandra
Warrumbungle

Region East

12. Mid Coast

Greater Taree
Hastings

13. Gloucester / Great Lakes

Gloucester
Great Lakes

14. Lower Hunter

Cessnock
Dungog
Maitland
Port Stephens

15. Hunter Valley

Muswellbrook
Singleton

16. The Lakes

Lake Macquarie
Wyong

17. Gosford

18. Hawkesbury

19. Warringah
/Pittwater
Pittwater
Warringah

20. Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai

Hornsby
Ku-ring-gai

21. The Hills

22. Cumberland
Blacktown
Fairfield
Penrith

23. Blue Mountains

24. Sutherland
25. Macarthur
Camden
Campbelltown
Liverpool

26. Illawarra

Kiama
Shellharbour
Wollongong

27. Southern Highlands

Wingecarribee
Wollondilly

28. Chifley / Lithgow

Bathurst Regional
Lithgow
Oberon

Region South

29. Shoalhaven

30. Far South Coast

Bega Valley
Eurobodalla

31. Southern Tablelands

Goulburn Mulwaree
Upper Lachlan
Yass Valley

32. Lake George

Palerang
Queanbeyan City

33. Monaro

Bombala
Cooma-Monaro
Snowy River

34. Riverina Highlands

Gundagai
Tumbarumba
Tumut

35. Riverina

Coolamon
Junee
Lockhart
Urana
Wagga Wagga

36. Southern Border

Albury
Berrigan
Corowa
Greater Hume

37. MIA

Griffith
Leeton
Murrumbidgee
Narrandera
Carrathool
Hay

38. Mid Murray

Conargo
Deniliquin
Jerilderie
Murray
Wakool

39. Lower Western

Balranald
Wentworth

Region West

40. Cudgegong

Mid Western Regional

41. North West

Bogan
Coonamble
Walgett
Warren

42. Orana

Dubbo
Narromine

Wellington

43. Canobolas

Blayney
Cabonne
Cowra
Orange

44. South West Slopes

Boorowa
Cootamundra
Harden

Young

45. Mid Lachlan Valley

Forbes
Lachlan
Parkes
Weddin

46. Bland Temora

Bland
Temora

47. Far West

Bourke
Brewarrina
Central Darling
Cobar
Unincorporated NSW

*Where a District is a team or zone, the LGAs are listed.

Change in 2013/14: Hay and Carrathool were previously in Region West and are now in Region South as part of the MIA District.

NSW RFS Regions

Region North



Volunteers	13,752
Male	10,783
Female	2,969
Incidents in 2013/14	5,270
Vehicles	2,047
NSW RFS Districts	11
NSW RFS Brigades	530

Landscape types

Coastal scrub, forested hills and flat cropping and grazing in the west

Region East



Volunteers	22,898
Male	17,068
Female	5,830
Incidents in 2013/14	11,832
Vehicles	1,772
NSW RFS Districts	17
NSW RFS Brigades	507

Landscape types

Urban interface, coastal heathlands, mountains and rolling farm and grasslands

Region South



Volunteers	21,723
Male	17,238
Female	4,485
Incidents in 2013/14	3,855
Vehicles	2,186
NSW RFS Districts	11
NSW RFS Brigades	495
Square kilometres	169,060
Population	551,061

Landscape types

Native and plantation forests, coastal heathlands, alpine forests, flat and rolling grasslands

Region West



Volunteers	15,373
Male	12,600
Female	2,773
Incidents in 2013/14	2,418
Vehicles	1,784
NSW RFS Districts	8
NSW RFS Brigades	521
Square kilometres	422,600
Population	273,041

Landscape types

Region West covers more than 62 percent of the State. Largely open grasslands with cropping and grazing, also heavily timbered near Mudgee and Orange

Key facts for 2013/14

Total volunteers	73,746
Region North	13,752
Region South	21,723
Region East	22,898
Region West	15,373

NSW RFS total expenses budget	\$331.116M
--------------------------------------	-------------------

Total vehicles	7,164
Tankers	3,917
Pumpers	68
Personnel transport and command vehicles	816
Bulk water carriers	60
Tanker trailers	1,244
Cargo, tip trucks, various trailers	543
Communications vehicles and trailers	41
Catering vehicles and trailers	84
Marine craft	29
Slip on trailers and miscellaneous vehicles	362

NB: Non-Service owned vehicles are not included in the 2013/14 figure for tankers.

Total radios	22,412
---------------------	---------------

Incidents: Four year view

Incidents	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Bush/grass fires	8,032	7,474	4,154	4,213
Structural fires	1,090	957	849	846
Vehicle fires	1,535	1,638	1,500	1,462
Motor vehicle accidents	3,909	3,881	4,211	4,016
Investigation	2,302	1,777	2,020	2,201
Controlled burns	2,664	1,088	964	1,095
Refuse fires	634	608	592	788
Spillage	590	214	252	461
Assist other agencies	547	258	318	265
Flood	115	22	58	120
Other	1,957	4,410	3,310	2,499
Total	23,375	23,436	18,913	18,830

NB: Upgrades to the Incident Control On Line (ICON) system in the 2013/14 reporting period have resulted in greater precision within the reporting categories.

The Investigation category was previously referred to as a false alarms and smoke scares and includes all those incidents where NSW RFS members investigated but there was no sign of fire.

Controlled burns refer to all hazard reduction and pile burns.

Spillage includes oil spills, gas leaks and all other spills.

Incidents: Region by Region in 2013/14

Incidents	North	South	East	West	State
Bush/grass fires	2,422	1,338	3,229	1,043	8,032
Structural fires	206	243	470	171	1,090
Motor vehicle fires	293	203	876	163	1,535
Motor vehicle accidents	763	729	2,009	408	3,909
Investigation	392	378	1,347	185	2,302
Controlled burns	610	430	1,489	135	2,664
Refuse fires	80	91	378	85	634
Spillages	106	75	380	29	590
Assist other agencies	85	88	319	55	547
Flood	6	10	98	1	115
Other incidents	307	270	1,237	143	1,957
Total incidents	5,270	3,855	11,832	2,418	23,375

Planning for the future: NSW 2021

NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One is the NSW Government's plan to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, strengthen our local environment and communities, and restore accountability to Government over 10 years.

NSW 2021 has five strategies and 32 goals. The NSW RFS has responsibilities under Goal 28 of the Plan and we report on those responsibilities through the annual NSW 2021 Performance Report to Parliament.

The NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2011-2015 has been aligned with Goal 28. Reports on the performance of the NSW RFS in 2013/14 appear in the Key Focus Area chapter.

NSW 2021 Goal 28 is: Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters and includes the following:

28.2 Defend against suburban and bushland fires

Increase community resilience to the impact of fires through prevention and preparedness activities

28.2.2 Enhance volunteer training programs with a particular focus on cadet training schemes

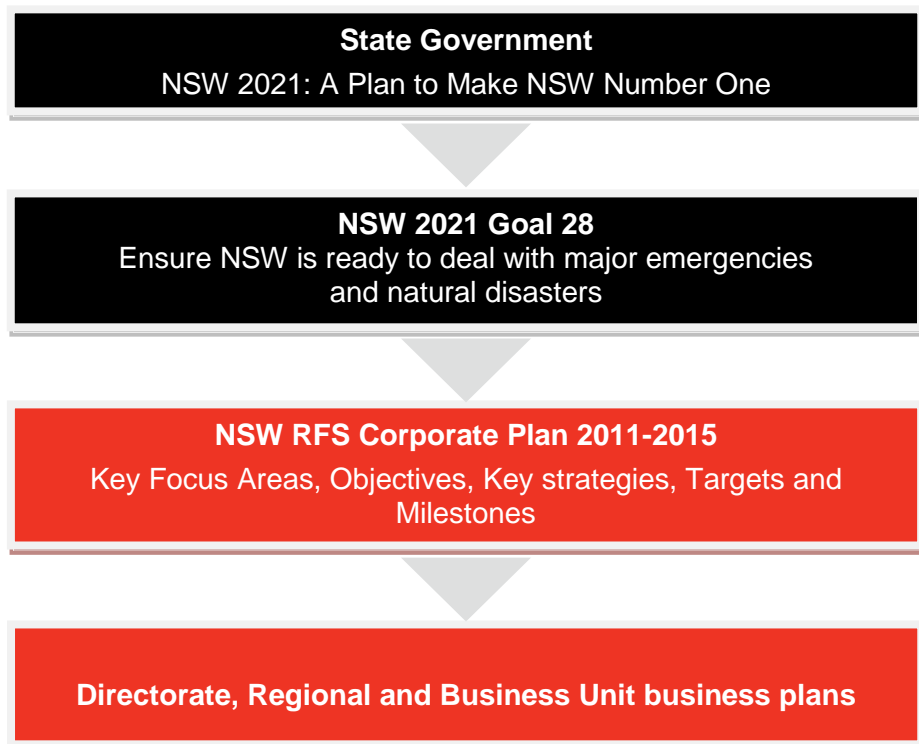
28.2.3 Increase the number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places

Increase hazard reduction across NSW

28.2.4 Increase the number of properties protected by hazard reduction works across all bush fire prone land tenures by 20,000 per year by 2016

28.2.5 Increase the annual average level of area treated by hazard reduction activities by 45 percent by 2016.

NSW RFS Planning Structure

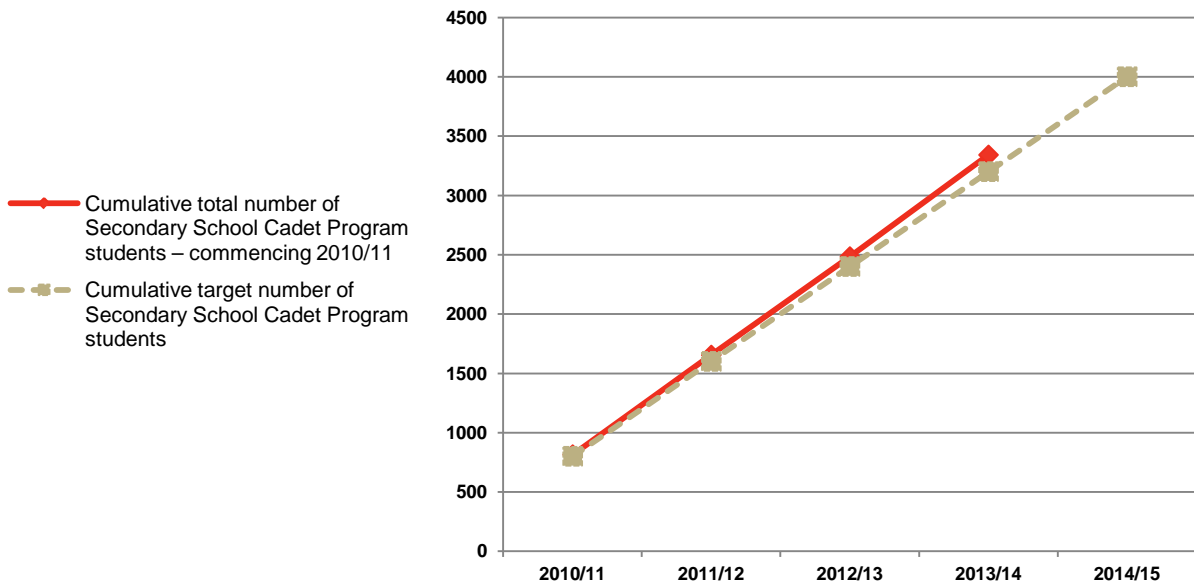


NSW RFS Performance 2013/14

Goal 28.2.2

NSW 2021 Goal 28.2.2

Train an additional 4,000 secondary school children through the school cadets program by 2016.



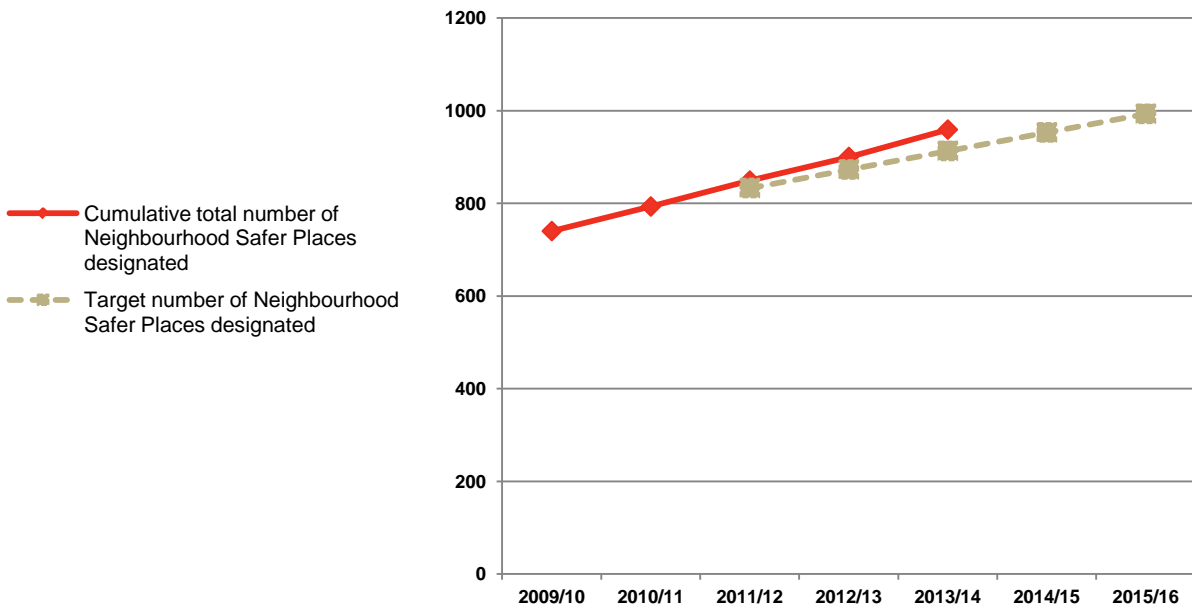
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cumulative total number of Secondary School Cadet Program students – commencing 2010/11	814	1,654 (840)	2,484 (827)	3,341 (860)		
Cumulative target number of Secondary School Cadet Program students	800	1,600	2,400	3,200	4,000	

NSW RFS Performance 2013/14

Goal 28.2.3

NSW 2021 Goal 28.2.3

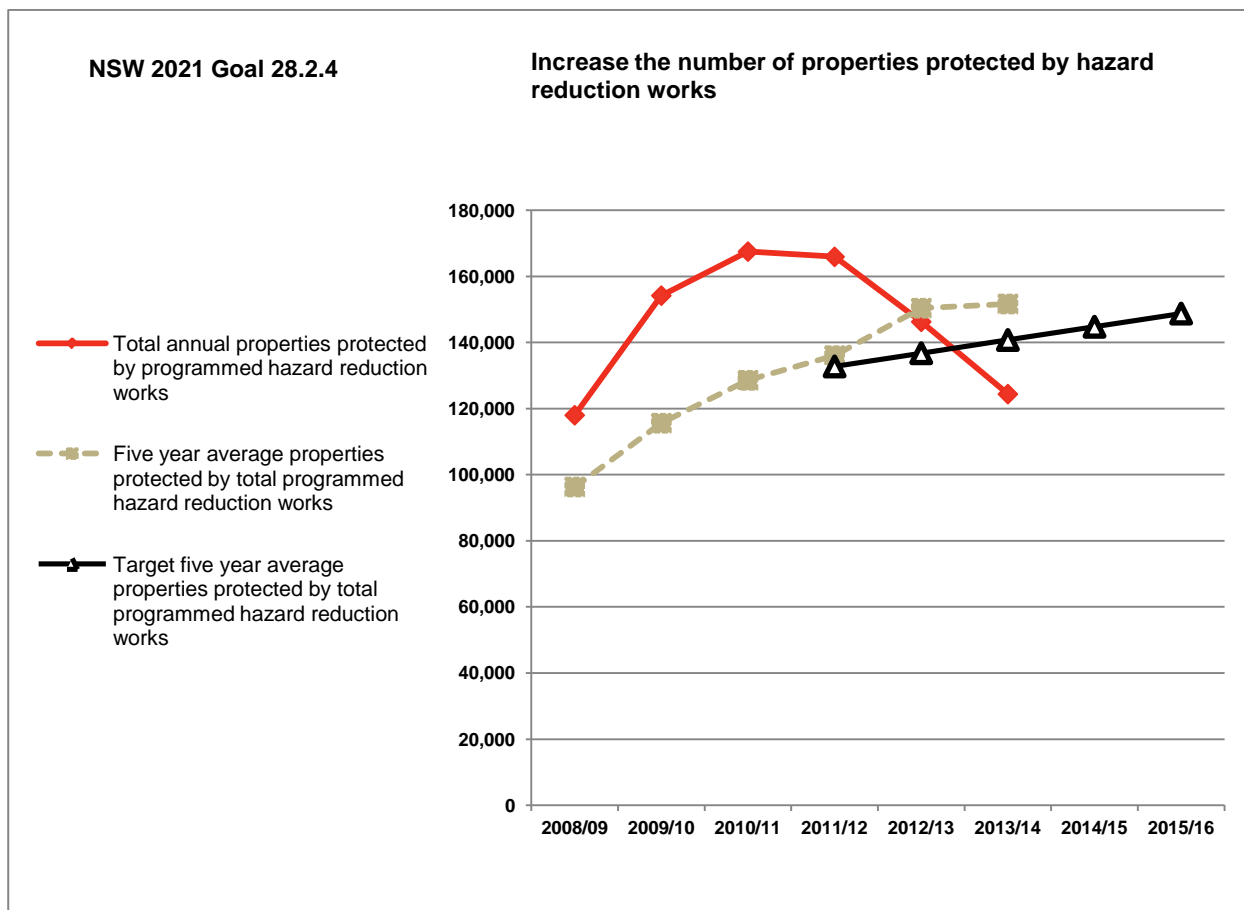
Increase the number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places.



	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cumulative total number of Neighbourhood Safer Places designated	740	793	849	900	959		
Target number of Neighbourhood Safer Places designated			833	873	913	953	993

NSW RFS Performance 2013/14

Goal 28.2.4



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total annual properties protected by programmed hazard reduction works	118,021	154,211	167,533	165,945	146,292	124,414		
Five year average properties protected by total programmed hazard reduction works	96,313	115,612	128,593	136,063	150,400	151,679		
Target five year average properties protected by programmed hazard reduction works				132,793	136,793	140,793	144,793	148,793

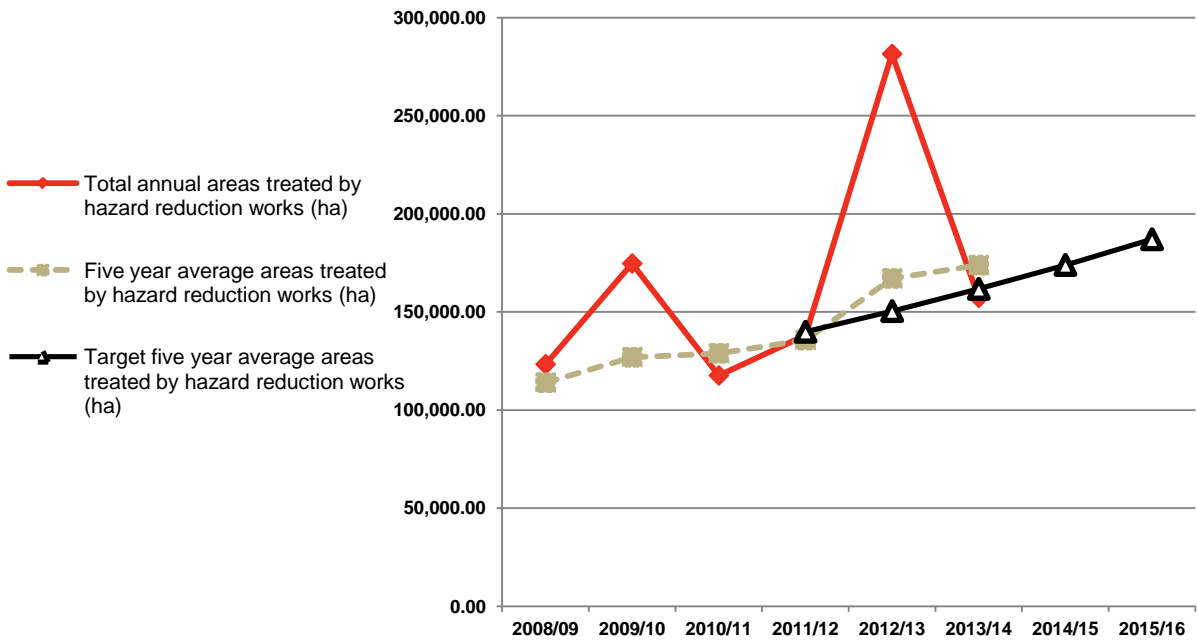
NOTE: A further explanation of these figures can be found on page 26.

NSW RFS Performance 2013/14

Goal 28.2.5

NSW 2021 Goal 28.2.5

Increase the annual average level of the area treated by hazard reduction.



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total annual areas treated by hazard reduction works (ha)	123,334.51	174,705.85	117,633.25	138,211.48	281,492.19	157,222.46		
Five year average areas treated by hazard reduction works (ha)	113,946	126,915	128,894	135,688	167,075	173,853		
Target five year average areas treated by hazard reduction works (ha)				139,900	150,435	161,762	173,943	187,041

NOTE: A further explanation of these figures can be found on page 26.