



Stuart Ayres MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Minister Assisting the Premier on Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 17 October 2014

BLUE MOUNTAINS RISES FROM THE ASHES ONE YEAR ON

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres has joined Blue Mountains MP Roza Sage to mark the one year anniversary of the devastating bush fires which tore through the Blue Mountains and surrounding communities.

“What we saw 12 months ago was a tragic reminder of the harsh reality of living with the Australian bush,” Mr Ayres said.

“The tireless work of the men and women who battled the fires was herculean, not to mention the thousands of volunteers who took leave from their regular jobs, and didn’t return until the job was done.

“Many people owe their lives to the direct action of the brave firefighters who worked around the clock to preserve life, property and bushland.”

Blue Mountains MP Roza Sage praised the resilience of the local community.

“One year after the devastating bush fires, we have an opportunity to recognise the incredible progress that has taken place in the Blue Mountains. The way our community has come together at a time of serious adversity has been an inspiration,” Mrs Sage said.

“The renewal of our neighbourhoods will be ongoing and for so many people there remains a long road ahead but having witnessed the dedication of so many over the past year I am confident we can continue to achieve great gains.”

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons praised the professionalism of NSW RFS volunteers during the October fires, which were the most challenging in more than a decade.

“Firefighters worked to protect life and property as part of a coordinated firefighting effort including NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers, Fire & Rescue NSW, National Parks and Wildlife, along with their interstate fire colleagues, NSW Police and the wider NSW emergency management community,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“The enormity of the effort during that time cannot be underestimated, with close to 2000 NSW RFS firefighters mobilised daily, supported by 500 fire trucks and 100 aircraft.

“Importantly though we saw tremendous support from the local community, working shoulder to shoulder with the emergency services to help protect each other.

“This destructive event will be felt throughout the Blue Mountains community for many years to come. It is a time that will not be forgotten; not by residents, or by the firefighters who worked so hard to protect the community from those difficult fires.”

Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) Commissioner Greg Mullins said the Blue Mountains fire of 17 October 2013 will go into the history books as one of our fastest and most destructive bush fires ever.

“Ahead of forecast conditions, FRNSW pre-deployed all available firefighters from the greater Sydney area to the outer suburbs most at risk from bush fire – in all more than 90 fire trucks and about 400 firefighters responded,” Commissioner Mullins said.

“At Mt Victoria, FRNSW and RFS crews were being over-run by a crowning fire, and only due to the professionalism and skill of firefighters from both services were serious injuries averted.”

Minister Ayres also took the opportunity to remind all homeowners to make a Bush Fire Survival Plan.

“Today is important to recognise the destruction that took place, and continue our vigilant message to prepare your property ahead of summer.”

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