



**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE**



# MEDIA RELEASE

## **Rain dampens hazard reduction plans**

**29 May 2015**

Recent rain along the east coast of NSW has put the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) behind schedule with planned hazard reduction burns, NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers confirmed today.

In April, statewide rainfall for NSW was 47 percent above average, making it the wettest April since 1990. This was preceded by consistent rain over the summer months and followed by high levels of rainfall across north eastern NSW in early May.

“Recent high levels of rain have left the landscape too wet to effectively burn, resulting in a number of proposed hazard reduction burns being postponed,” Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

“Traditionally 53 percent of hazard reduction, in terms of the number of hectares burnt, occurs between March and May. Due to rain in April and May we are behind where we need to be at this time of year and following a wet summer, the 2015 hazard reduction target will not be met.”

The Bureau of Meteorology has advised an El Nino event commenced in early May 2015, which typically results in below average winter and spring rainfall over eastern Australia and above average daytime temperatures over the southern half of Australia.

“The recent rain has not only delayed a number of hazard reduction burns, but it will result in increased growth of grass and other vegetation,” Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

“If the forecast conditions eventuate in late winter, all it will take is a few weeks of warm, dry weather and we will again be contending with dry landscapes.”

Deputy Commissioner Rogers said hazard reduction was a high priority and the NSW RFS would monitor weather forecasts and schedule work to be carried out as soon as possible.

“Hazard reduction burning is important as it can help to reduce the intensity of bush fires and better protect lives and properties,” Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

“While hazard reduction burning can be effective in protecting homes during a bush fire it is not the silver bullet. A well prepared property and a Bush Fire Survival Plan is the best defence against a fire.

“I encourage everyone to take the time to prepare their property now, which means clearing gutters, maintaining gardens and checking equipment such as hoses, pumps and generators.”

Information on preparing your property as well as a list of proposed hazard reduction burns can be found on the NSW Rural Fire Service website - [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)



**For more information contact the NSW RFS 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)**