

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Smoke expected as hazard reduction activity increases

31 August 2012

Fire agencies will step up their preparations for the bush fire season this weekend, with dozens of controlled hazard reduction burns scheduled.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said around 170 burns are scheduled this week, with 90 this weekend alone.

NSW RFS volunteer firefighters will join with NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Parks and Wildlife and Forests NSW to complete the burns.

“This is important work ahead of bush fire season which will help protect people and where they live,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“Over the last few years we have experienced significant rainfall which has made hazard reduction difficult and we currently have a window of opportunity to complete as much of this work as possible.

“Smoke will be noticeable across many areas this weekend, particularly Sydney.”

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said hazard reduction burns are scheduled throughout the State, including Sydney, the Illawarra, Hunter, South Coast, North Coast and Far and Central West.

In the Sydney area, controlled burns are planned in areas including the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Warringah, Campbelltown, Hills, Penrith and Sutherland areas.

People living near a controlled burn, especially those with health issues, should take precautions such as closing doors and windows.

In some areas, roads may be closed or smoke affected and motorists should slow down if driving in smoky conditions.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said it was important that this work be completed now, ahead of the coming bush fire season which officially starts in a month.

“The outlook for much of NSW is for an increased level of fire activity compared to previous years and just as we’re preparing, it’s important the community prepares too,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

The statutory bush fire danger period starts on 1 October however some areas, such as local government areas in the north of NSW, have already started their danger period.

A list of planned hazard reductions is available on the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. Traffic information is available at www.livetraffic.com.

For further information, contact the NSW RFS State Duty Media Officer (02) 9898 1855