



Worst fire conditions in decades to hit NSW

Monday 7 January 2012

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons has declared a state-wide Total Fire Ban for NSW as the State braces for one of its worst fire danger days on record.

The Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Ranges have a fire danger rating of Catastrophic. Widespread areas of the State have a fire danger rating of Extreme.

“This is one of the worst fire danger days on record for NSW.

“I cannot say it more plainly: the risk is real and potentially deadly. People need to act now,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“If you live in bush land or an isolated area where there is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating your only option is to leave early. You could move to a built up area, away from bush land, such as the centre of a town.

However, people living in built up areas, well away from bush land, with minimal exposure to vegetation, should monitor conditions and follow their Bush Fire Survival Plan,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

More generally, the NSW RFS advises people to:

- Prepare a Bush Fire Survival Plan and act on it. It is not too late to do a plan tonight;
- Find out where their ‘Neighbourhood Safer Place’ (place of last resort) is located;
- Stay informed via local media, news websites, plus the RFS’ website, Facebook page and Twitter feed;
- Do not travel into any bush fire prone areas; and
- Avoid being in a bush fire prone area in the heat of the day.

The NSW RFS is working with local authorities, including NSW Police, to identify and where appropriate, relocate, at risk persons within the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Ranges. These at risk people may include:

- Hospitals and nursing homes;
- National Parks, camping grounds and caravan parks;
- Education and child care facilities;
- Recreational facilities operated by the Department of Sport and Recreation; and
- Correction Centres and Juvenile Detention Centres.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said that the NSW RFS has been preparing for some time for these difficult and dangerous fire conditions.

“We have all our RFS volunteers, trucks and tankers on standby, plus the firefighters and resources of Fire and Rescue NSW, National Parks and Forests NSW. Literally thousands of firefighters are on alert for tomorrow.

“Around 100 aircraft are ready, including two Air-Cranes.

“Our advice to people is to be prepared, stay informed and take action,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

Further information, including Bush Fire Survival Plans, details of Neighbourhood Safer Places and the latest Fire Danger Ratings, can be found on the NSW RFS website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.

People are also encouraged to follow the NSW RFS' Facebook page and Twitter account @NSWRFS to get the latest fire information.

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