



Steph Cooke

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience
Minister for Flood Recovery

MEDIA RELEASE

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FIREFIGHTING AIR TANKER TO TOUCH DOWN AFTER MARATHON MISSION

After a three month deployment in support of the US fire service's firefighting efforts, the NSW Rural Fire Service's (RFS) *Marie Bashir* Large Air Tanker will arrive in Sydney this afternoon.

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience Steph Cooke said the plane and a crew of aviation personnel have spent hundreds of hours in the air, fighting 37 fires across six US states and dropping more than 1.23 million litres of suppressants.

"What was initially a four week posting for the *Marie Bashir* and her crew was extended to more than three months, undertaking life-saving work in order to protect American communities," Ms Cooke said.

"Our thoughts are with impacted communities including in Idaho, Nevada and California, as well as the firefighters and other personnel who battled the recent fires.

"NSW firefighters are all too familiar with the threat of bush fires and have a proud history of helping others, both here in Australia and overseas.

"Our personnel and resources are among the best in the world and the request to have our Large Air Tanker help out is testament to this."

RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers said NSW has the nation's largest aerial firefighting fleet and continues to assist interstate and international firefighting agencies.

"It's great to be able to provide this support to US fire authorities for the second year in a row," Commissioner Rogers said.

"We welcome the *Marie Bashir* back to home soil at RAAF Base Richmond, where she will be ready for dispatch in NSW and interstate this bush fire season as warmer conditions begin to return."

The 737 Large Air Tanker has a cruising speed of 850 kilometres per hour and can drop more than 15,000 litres of fire suppressants at a time.

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