



Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

MEDIA RELEASE

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PREPARE NOW FOR LOOMING BUSH FIRE SEASON

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher has today warned the coming bushfire season has the potential to be one of the worst in years as this long weekend marks the official start in NSW.

“The last few summers have been relatively calm in terms of fire activity, mainly because of the extensive rain experienced across large parts of the state,” Minister Gallacher said.

“However that rain has brought with it fire danger conditions not seen in NSW for some time. As the extensive growth generated by the rain dries out, there’s a very real potential of serious fires this season.

“We’ve already seen fires in the last few weeks which have claimed property, and one of the big risks this summer is complacency.

“People need to understand the risks a hot and dry season bring and prepare accordingly,” Minister Gallacher said.

“I’d urge everyone to take steps now to ensure they don’t put their property or their family at any unnecessary risk.

“We have learned from past bush and grass fire incidents and we know the better prepared people are for the coming fire season, the less risk they put themselves and our firefighters under,” Minister Gallacher said.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said this season there is an increased risk of grass fires.

“Especially across the western parts of NSW, there is extensive grass growth caused by the recent rain and in some areas, we have not seen conditions like this for 30 to 40 years.

“Grass fires are especially dangerous because they can start easily and spread quickly, destroying homes, crops and livelihoods. They can easily catch people off guard with devastating consequences.

“In the past two months alone, we have seen more than 1,800 bush and grass fires and with a return to warmer and drier conditions this summer, we can expect even more fires.”

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said despite the wet weather in recent months, fire agencies and land managers have been working hard to conduct hazard reductions when conditions are suitable, with nearly 110,000 properties worth \$47.8 billion protected through these works since the beginning of the year.

Fire & Rescue NSW Commissioner Greg Mullins said his firefighters are prepared and ready to assist their Rural Fire Service counterparts.

“As they have in the past, our firefighters have been working side-by-side with NSW RFS volunteers and other agencies to conduct hazard reductions and fight fires,” FRNSW Commissioner Greg Mullins said.

“We cannot emphasise enough the importance of this hazard reduction work, when conditions are suitable, in helping to protect lives and properties,” Commissioner Mullins said.

Bush Fire Survival Plans and information on preparing for bush and grass fires is available at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. People can also download the NSW RFS ‘Fires Near Me’ app, like the NSW RFS Facebook page and follow ‘NSWRFS’ on Twitter for fire information.

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