



David Elliott
Minister for Police
Minister for Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW '737' LARGE AIR TANKER TO FIGHT BUSHFIRES

NSW will be the only Australian state or territory with a permanent '737 Fireliner' Large Air Tanker (LAT) to provide stronger bush fire protection to communities all year around with the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government signing a contract to purchase the new aircraft.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said the new LAT would protect Rural Fire Service firefighters as part of a \$26.3 million investment in community safety and emergency services.

"This type of aircraft can deliver 15,000 litres of fire suppressants, transport about 70 firefighters and operate from a number of regional airports," Mr Elliott said.

While winter traditionally is a time of year when LATs are not based in the country, in recent years there has been a growing need for this type of aircraft all year round. RFS firefighters responded to bushfires in Ulladulla and Port Stephens during the winter months of 2018.

"Last fire season there were more fires during winter than across the summer months. The NSW Government is committed to ensuring our firefighters have the tools they need year round to help protect lives and property."

NSW RFS Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers said the Service had evaluated a number of different Large and Very Large Air Tankers over recent fire seasons and had settled on the '737' as the preferred option, operated by Canadian company Coulson Aviation.

"This type of aircraft provides us with a fast, effective and flexible option for fighting fires year-round, and supporting firefighters on the ground," Acting Commissioner Rogers said.

Coulson Aviation CEO Wayne Coulson said he looked forward to being able to work with the RFS on this new venture and would be expanding its NSW base in the coming months and will be looking to hire Australian pilots and ground crew.

The last of the contracted Large Air Tankers left NSW to return to the United States late last week. The official naming of the aircraft will take place later in the year.

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