



Barry O'Farrell MP Premier of NSW Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 20 October 2013

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell today declared a state of emergency for NSW ahead of the forecast deteriorating weather conditions in bush fire zones.

Earlier today, Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons wrote to the Premier requesting he declare a state of emergency under section 33 of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act.

Following consultation with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and a meeting of the State Emergency Management Committee, the Premier signed the order this afternoon and appointed the RFS Commissioner responsible for controlling and co-ordinating the declaration.

"The RFS Commissioner has advised weather conditions over the next few days will deteriorate significantly and that there is potential for a significant and widespread danger to life and property across the State," Mr O'Farrell said.

"This is not an action taken lightly by either the Commissioner, the Minister or myself, but it's important the Rural Fire Service and other emergency services have the powers and the resources they need to combat this threat.

"We are planning for the worst but hoping for the best," he said.

Emergency Services Minister Michael Gallacher said a state of emergency declaration triggered a range of measures including to:

- allow emergency services personnel to direct the public to evacuate an area or not enter an area;
- order power and gas supplies to be shut off;
- shore up or pull down buildings; and,
- enter premises to facilitate the exercise of these powers.

"It is an offence to obstruct or disobey these orders," Mr Gallacher said.

"I again urge people in bush fire prone areas to prepare their homes and have a bush fire survival plan in place. Go to www.rfs.nsw.gov.au for all the information.

"I ask the public to stay tuned to media, official social networking sites and the RFS website so they are up to date with the latest information."

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