



**David Elliott**  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NSW PROTECTED BY AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST AVIATION FLEET**

The people of NSW will this season be protected from bushfires by the single largest aerial fleet of any fire agency in Australia.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott and NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM unveiled the full firefighting fleet of the NSW RFS aircraft at RAAF Base at Richmond today, the largest aviation investment by any State in the nation.

From the impressive Large Air Tanker (LAT) Marie Bashir, helicopters and Citation 'Birddog' aircraft, the range of equipment and capabilities were put on show as firefighters were winched and water bombers tested during a training exercise.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said NSW is leading the way in tackling fires both from the air and on the ground.

"The NSW Government has invested \$26.3 million to provide the LAT 'Marie Bashir' and Citation 'Birddog' aircraft that will undertake line scanning operations. Last season, the LAT proved its value time and time again," Mr Elliott said.

"We've also unveiled two new Bell 412 Helicopters, an investment of \$6.3 million that will further enhance capability across the state.

"No matter what Mother Nature throws at us; we have the ability to respond. If we experience a wet summer, these aircraft can assist rescuing people in floodwaters, or they can transport our crews to fast moving grass fires this bush fire season.

"NSW RFS and Australian Defence Force aircraft successfully rescued 51 people from imminent danger last bushfire season. These new aircraft will double this capability, and along with the two BK117 helicopters, enhance our rapid aerial and remote area firefighting operations."

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Rob Rogers said that the RFS is committed to ensuring our firefighters have the tools they need year round to help protect lives and property.

“These impressive aircraft are just part of the fleet, with more than 100 call-when-needed and contracted aircraft, that have and will continue to support firefighting operations across NSW this bush fire season,” Commissioner Rogers said.

“Many of these aircraft have proved themselves already this season and the support from the sky will continue to be invaluable.”

“I also take this time to thank our volunteers who time and time again give so much to protect the people and property of NSW.”

The fleet of NSW RFS aircraft will be based at various locations including RAAF Base Richmond and Bankstown Airport and will be deployed across the State and interstate as needed.

This follows the NSW Government’s recent announcement of \$192.2 million over five years to commence implementation of key recommendations arising from the Independent NSW Bushfire Inquiry, including \$5.4 million to enhance the existing RFS aerial fleet, training facilities and to trial night time aerial firefighting.

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