



Steph Cooke

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience
Minister for Flood Recovery

Dugald Saunders

Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Western New South Wales

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****Photos available [here](#)*

RFS AND FARMERS TEAM UP TO FIGHT FIRE

A landmark new initiative will help firefighters and farmers work together to better protect communities in regional and rural NSW from bush fires and grass fires.

Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience and Minister for Flood Recovery Steph Cooke today released a first-of-its-kind Operational Guide for the use of Farm Fire Units.

“Thanks to this new framework for Farm Fire Units, rural landholders will be empowered to work side-by-side with NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) members to protect their own properties and improve safety around fire grounds,” Ms Cooke said.

“The record sustained wet weather has caused widespread vegetation growth which will increase the threat of grass fires across regional and rural NSW this summer, which is why it’s important to find ways to ensure our communities are better prepared.”

Farm Fire Units are privately owned and operated by landholders and consist of a vehicle-mounted water tank, pump and hose, and these guidelines will ensure a more integrated approach to firefighting alongside the RFS.

Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales Dugald Saunders said it is important to harness the local knowledge and skill of private landholders.

“Farmers are often the first responders to grass fires and they understand the risks and seriousness of operating machinery in hot, dry conditions,” Mr Saunders said.

“These new guidelines will provide another layer of assurance for landholders in remote parts of the State whose properties are significant distances away from their nearest town.”

Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson said the guidelines will help rural landholders to better prepare for the risk of a range of hazards.

“As custodians of significant portions of the State, farmers are often on the front line when it comes to bush fires and grass fires, which is why it’s important they work in close collaboration with the RFS to protect their lives and livelihoods,” Mr Anderson said.

RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers said the Farm Fire Unit Operational Guide is another step in bolstering the partnership between firefighters and farmers ahead of the next fire season.

“Over the last couple of years, we have been working hard to develop a framework for a better, more integrated relationship between farmers and the RFS, and NSW Farmers has played a critical role in developing this,” Commissioner Rogers said.

“The guidelines will enable RFS brigades to better understand the farmer’s perspective and the high degree of skill and knowledge in areas such as land management and how Farm Fire Units can best be integrated into firefighting operations, safely.”

NSW Farmers President Xavier Martin said it was great to have these guidelines and framework in place for the working relationship to continue between firefighters and farmers.

“NSW Farmers has appreciated being able to share our important knowledge and we look forward to working with the NSW RFS over the coming months to ensure our grain crops, orchards and livestock are protected against any blazes,” Mr Martin said.

A range of guides and tools are available at: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/farm-fire-safety.

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