



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

MEDIA RELEASE

Don't be the fire risk to your community if conducting burns

30 July 2018

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has sent additional fire investigators to the Northern Rivers, Northern Tablelands and Clarence Valley regions following a recent spike in the number of illegal and escaped hazard reduction burns.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said one-third of all illegal fire activity reported in the Northern Rivers District during the past year had occurred within the last month, while firefighters had to attend more than 50 illegal burns in the Northern Tablelands District.

"With a team of extra fire investigators in the region targeting illegal burns, if you do the wrong thing you will face the consequences," Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

"We have received many reports about people lighting up without providing proper notifications and carelessly allowing burns to escape, which poses a very real and potentially deadly risk to your community if that escaped burn takes hold.

"Given the prevailing dry conditions, it is vital that you only light up when it is safe to do so and make sure that you comply with the rules, even if you have conducted burns on your property for years."

Deputy Commissioner Rogers reminded land managers and land holders that they will need a free Fire Permit before lighting up when the Bush Fire Danger Period commences in the Armidale Regional, Clarence Valley, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha Local Government Areas on Wednesday 1 August, 2018.

Deputy Commissioner Rogers said heavy fines apply for the unsafe use of fire or if a fire escapes - landholders who fail to notify firefighters and neighbours face fines of up to \$5,500 and/or 12 months jail while escaped fires attract penalties of up to \$110,000 and/or five years prison.

"Don't be the fire risk to your community, know your obligations if conducting burns and know the costs if you do the wrong thing, but most importantly, if a fire does get out of hand, make sure you report it immediately to Triple Zero (000)," Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

"I also encourage everyone to start preparing their property and family now, including checking and maintaining your firefighting equipment and to make or update your bush fire survival plan."

Information about hazard reduction burning and required notifications is available on the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP.

For interviews, please contact your local Fire Control Centre.

For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on (02) 9898 1855.
For current incidents or major fire updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au