



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



MEDIA RELEASE

Aviation first for fire burning in the Central West

Sunday 15th January 2017

As a fire continues to burn in the Central West the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has committed the use of aircraft at night to monitor and assist firefighters in a New South Wales first.

NSW RFS Incident Controller Superintendent David Hoadley said the Ungula Road, Wuuluman fire burning between Wellington and Mudgee and to the west of the Cudgegong River has been burning for a number of days.

“The use of aircraft is greatly assisting firefighters on the ground in an effort to bring this fire under control,” Superintendent Hoadley said.

“As we get closer to containing this fire, the NSW RFS will be utilising aircraft which would normally cease operations before dark, in night time operations.

“For the first time in New South Wales, the use of a helicopter at night to monitor will ensure the efforts so far put in place do not go in vain as we near containment.

“As work continues in to the night, having a helicopter fitted with infrared and night scoping will enhance the ability for firefighters to focus on hotspots, not normally seen.”

The fire which started on Wednesday 11 January has seen a number of first time aviation measures.

“The use of fixed wing aircraft, the Aircrane and the Large and Very Large Air Tanker being used on the same fire is another first.”

“Having three fixed wing Fire Bosses, capable of scooping water from a water body which limits the downtime before refilling, is another milestone in aviation fire fighting.”

“When you include the Aircrane ‘Elsie’ for continued water bombing, ‘Thor’ and ‘Southern Belle’ which have dropped retardant - it’s a pretty impressive group.

“The effort to gain control of this fire and ensure it stays on the western side of the Cudgegong River, shows the commitment and resourcefulness of the NSW RFS.

“These aircraft assisting our highly skilled firefighters demonstrates to the community you are not alone and the NSW RFS is here to help. We will not leave until the fire is out.”

Overnight crews were able to undertake extensive mopping up and blacking out with firefighters today taking advantage of more favourable conditions to back burn and keep the fire within containment lines.

For further updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

For more information contact: Media Liaison Officer, Matthew Apps 0407 904 940
For current incidents or major fire updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au