



MEDIA RELEASE

Hazard Reduction burns rescheduled due to health warnings

8 August 2014

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) and other agencies have rescheduled a number of planned hazard reduction burns for this weekend, following advice from health authorities.

NSW Health has advised that under forecast weather conditions, smoke from hazard reduction burns on Saturday would have caused 'a significant public health risk' across the Sydney metropolitan area across the weekend.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said as a result of the advice from health authorities, a number of hazard reductions have been rescheduled.

"Hazard reduction is about protecting life and property – and the advice we've received from NSW Health makes it very clear that these activities could have put people at risk due to the effects of smoke," Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

"It is unfortunate that some of these planned burns won't go ahead as scheduled but we're acting in the interests of community safety".

Deputy Commissioner Rogers said smoke plume modelling by the NSW RFS shows that if the planned burns went ahead, smoke would settle in many parts of Sydney over the weekend due to forecast weather conditions.

"Our modelling shows that by conducting these hazard reductions on Saturday, there would be significant smoke haze across Sydney due to the weather conditions that are forecast.

"A temperature inversion is forecast for Sunday morning, which would trap smoke in the Sydney basin.

"We are now looking to reschedule eight of the 20 planned burns around Sydney, so we can get them done as quickly as possible before summer.

"In some cases, some of these planned burns will be conducted today whilst others have been rescheduled to Sunday when weather conditions are expected to have improved.

"We are currently behind on our targets for hazard reduction heading into the bush fire season due to weather conditions in recent months.

"The NSW RFS and other agencies are working hard to catch up but it needs to be done safely," Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

