

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Fire takes hold ahead of season

15 August 2012

More than 1,600 NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) volunteer firefighters were kept busy with 38 bush and grass fires across NSW last weekend. They were joined by crews from Fire and Rescue NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Catchment Authority along with other Emergency Services agencies.

One fire at Bulli Tops in the Illawarra affected the F6 freeway for around 16 hours, directly threatened six homes and ten other minor buildings in Darkes Forest and burned close to 1400 hectares of bushland and scrub.

More than 120 firefighters were supported by five water bombing helicopters to bring the fire under control by Sunday evening.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said the extensive preparation by homeowners in the Darkes Forest area helped protect their properties from the fire and underscored the importance of having a Bush Fire Survival plan and being ready to act on it.

“Strong winds gusting up to 75kph on Friday afternoon quickly pushed the Bulli Tops fire close to homes. The hard work of the firefighters and homeowners helped protect these properties from the blaze.

“It was clear to our firefighters that these properties were well prepared for bush fires and they acted on their Bush Fire Survival plan. This helped save their properties and horses from the fire over the weekend.

“This fire is a timely reminder that bush and grass fires can strike at any time and everyone needs to be prepared.

“We already know that heavy rainfall has helped grass and other vegetation to flourish, creating large fuel loads and ideal fire conditions.

“I urge everyone to visit the NSW RFS website, download a Bush Fire Survival Plan and prepare themselves, their families and their homes for the upcoming bush fire season,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

This weekend NSW RFS volunteers also fought grass fires at Emu Heights and Birriwa, between Gulgong and Denman in the NSW Central West. Three sheds were destroyed in the Birriwa fire.

While this major fire fighting effort was underway NSW RFS volunteers also provided assistance to the NSW SES to deal with storm damage in areas such as Sutherland, Wollondilly, The Hills, Warringah/Pittwater, the Central Coast, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens.

For more details or photos of the Bulli Tops fire contact NSW RFS Media on 9898 1855.