



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Firefighters and landholders conducting hazard reduction across NSW

**24 May 2018**

Fire agencies and private landholders will take advantage of favourable weather conditions in the coming week to conduct vital hazard reduction burns across the state, reducing fuel loads and providing thousands of homes with added protection from bush fire.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said prescribed burns in areas including Hawkesbury, the Blue Mountains, Hornsby, Northern Beaches, Sutherland and the Southern Highlands are scheduled to commence tomorrow and across the weekend.

Smoke from these burns is expected to drift across the Greater Sydney Metropolitan, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Wollongong and Shoalhaven areas and may result in reduced air quality.

“The State Forest West burn at Colo Heights on Saturday and Sunday will reduce high fuel loads across 2,000 hectares, giving firefighters a better chance of saving lives and containing a bush fire before it can spread too far,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“In order to minimise the impact of smoke on Sydney and the western suburbs, firefighters will use lighting strategies to control the amount of fire and smoke produced.

“These burns are planned well in advance and a number of factors, including current weather conditions and forecast changes, are monitored right up to the moment burns are lit and if the prescription is not right, the activity will be amended or postponed.”

Members of the public are reminded that they should only call Triple Zero (000) if they see a fire without a fire truck in attendance.

People in smoke affected areas should avoid outdoor activity, close doors and windows, keep pets in a protected area, remove washing from clotheslines and, if driving, slow down and turn on headlights.

Asthmatics and people with respiratory or heart conditions should take appropriate precautions, follow treatment and management plans and keep their medication on hand. For further information, go to [www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/bushfire-smoke.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/bushfire-smoke.aspx)

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said it is important to take advantage of every hazard reduction opportunity as wet weather and unfavourable conditions resulted in the postponement of a number of controlled burns across the state last year.

A total of 121,466 hectares were treated in autumn and winter 2017, protecting 36,317 properties, compared to 226,500 hectares treated and 46,288 properties protected in autumn and winter 2016.

A full list of scheduled hazard reduction burns for the coming week is available at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/hr](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/hr)

**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](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)**