



# Stuart Ayres MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Sport and Recreation  
Minister Assisting the Premier on Western Sydney

---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

Thursday 31 July 2014

### NEW LAWS AND INCREASED FINES AHEAD OF BUSHFIRE SEASON

From tomorrow, residents in designated areas will be able to protect their homes from bushfires, with new laws introduced that make it easier to clear trees and vegetation from around their homes.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres announced the commencement of the 10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement laws in the Blue Mountains today, along with Member for Blue Mountains Roza Sage and NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.

Mr Ayres said the NSW Government was committed to removing regulatory obstacles for home owners to allow them to adequately prepare their home ahead of the 2014/15 bushfire season.

“By streamlining the processes for people to remove trees and vegetation, these laws are giving people greater flexibility to improve the safety of their homes,” Mr Ayres said.

“The new laws allow people in the designated areas to remove trees within 10 metres of their home, and clear vegetation other than trees within 50 metres of their home, provided they comply with the NSW RFS Code of Practice.

Roza Sage MP said removing the need for assessment or approval will empower home owners to minimise fuel loads around their home in an environmentally responsible way.

“A well-prepared property, along with a Bushfire Survival Plan, can minimise the risk of loss of life and property,” Mrs Sage said.

RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons reminded residents in the designated areas to understand their obligations and check whether they are in the 10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement area prior to removing vegetation or trees.

“The 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice outlines a number of restrictions which may be relevant, including locations of cultural significance or the slope of their property,” he said.

The new laws will also apply to schools, childcare centres and hospitals that are situated within the designated areas.

From tomorrow, the RFS will have an online tool available where people can check if they're in a designated 10/50 vegetation entitlement clearing area. People can enter their address or lot number into the RFS website to see if the new arrangements apply to them.

Copies of the Code of Practice can be obtained from the RFS or downloaded from [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

Mr Ayres also introduced higher penalties for 18 fire-related offences.

“Among the increases are penalties for littering involving cigarettes and matches, which has doubled to \$660 and to \$1320 when littering occurs on a day of a Total Fire Ban,” Mr Ayres said.

“Fine increases will also target land owners who conduct unlawful hazard reduction burns or fail to extinguish any type of fire.

“Residents should continue to make vital preparations for the upcoming bushfire season including hazard reduction burns where appropriate. These activities just need to be conducted responsibly.”

The RFS will work closely with NSW Police to ensure the new laws are implemented.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons noted the new laws and increased fines have come ahead of what could be a challenging season.

“Across the north of the State we have already seen windy and dry conditions leading to difficult fires,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“In early July we saw 167 bush and grass fires in just four days. A number of these were on the Mid-North Coast where one shed was destroyed in a fire at Bonny Hills and another burnt some 868 hectares at Great Lakes.”

22 Local Government Areas (LGAs) commence their Bush Fire Danger Period (BFDP) tomorrow, eight weeks ahead of the statutory Bush Fire Danger Period. They include:

- Armidale Dumaresq
- Guyra
- Glen Innes Severn
- Inverell
- Tenterfield
- Uralla
- Walcha
- Bellingen
- Ballina
- Byron
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Gloucester
- Great Lakes
- Greater Taree
- Kempsey
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Nambucca
- Port Macquarie Hastings
- Richmond Valley
- Tweed

While the statutory Bush Fire Danger Period commences on 1 October 2014, the weather conditions in the remainder of the State will continue to be monitored and adjustments to the BFDP will be made if required.

**MEDIA:**

**Sophie Onikul - 0428 596 319/John Redman – 0400 298 929 (Minister Ayres)  
RFS media - 9898 1855**