

# MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## Vital hazard reduction burn near Royal National Park

30 August 2012

One lane of the Princes Highway will be closed from 1pm to 4pm on Saturday, between President Ave at Kirrawee and Farnell Ave at Loftus, while firefighters conduct essential hazard reduction burns this weekend.

The lane is being closed to protect the safety of firefighters who will be working on a hazard reduction in the Royal National Park.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said the hazard reduction will remove a significant fire path that has grown in the Royal National Park since 1994 and cut the risk to the community of a serious fire during the coming fire season.

“During the 1980s and 1990s fires in this area claimed lives and closed the Highway, all local roads and the rail line.

“Although this area of the Royal National Park burnt five times between 1971 and 1994, it has not burnt since, leading to significant vegetation growth throughout the area. Smaller hazard reductions have assisted in reducing the risk over time, but a major hazard reduction is now required.

“The hazard reduction is being done ahead of the fire season while the weather conditions are favourable. A previous hazard reduction in the area could not go ahead because of rain,” Deputy Commissioner Rogers said.

Motorists are advised to expect significant delays on the Princes Highway on Saturday afternoon between Sylvania and Loftus. Motorists should observe road side signs and consider alternative routes via the M5 to Heathcote Road or via Bangor Bypass and Old Illawarra Road to Heathcote Road.

There will also be delays on Sunday due to the presence of firefighting vehicles, smoke haze and a reduced speed limit along the highway in the same location.

If smoke does drift into populated areas, residents can minimise its impact by keeping windows closed, keeping pets indoors and not leaving washing outside.

People with health conditions like asthma are advised to take their normal precautions and follow the tips on the Asthma Foundation’s website at [www.asthmafoundation.org.au/Bushfires](http://www.asthmafoundation.org.au/Bushfires).

Visitors to the Royal National Park on Saturday should enter via McKell Ave, Waterfall. All walking tracks and fire trails in the Temptation Creek area will be closed on both days. Visitor facilities at Audley including the Café and Boatshed will remain open all weekend.

Around 60 NSW RFS volunteer firefighters from ten local Brigades will assist with the hazard reduction, along with firefighters from NSW National Parks and Wildlife and Fire and Rescue NSW.

### For more information on:

- Road closures visit [www.livetraffic.com](http://www.livetraffic.com)
- Planned hazard reduction burns visit the Rural Fire Service website: [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

**Media enquiries:** RFS State Duty Media Officer 9898 1855 or NSW National Parks and Wildlife media on 9995 4537.