



MEDIA RELEASE

Risk of grass fires now even greater

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Recent record temperatures across parts of NSW and potentially more on the way have increased the risk of grass fires in many areas.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is warning the recent summer heatwaves have continued to dry out the landscape, particularly in grassland areas.

“The previous wet winter and now very warm summer has meant the threat of grass fires across the State has continued to increase,” Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said.

“In the last month alone, NSW RFS volunteers have attended 600 grass fires across the state.

“Some of these have resulted in the loss of stock, fencing, valuable equipment, buildings and homes.

“With the grass now drying out, the landscape is now even more susceptible to fire.

“Grass fires can be especially dangerous because they start easily and spread quickly, destroying not only homes, stock and crops, but also lives and livelihoods.”

With record breaking temperatures and significantly below average rainfall throughout January, Commissioner Fitzsimmons said there is a more urgent need to prepare.

“Farmers can help protect their properties by establishing firebreaks around paddocks, homes and other valuable assets like sheds and equipment,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“Maintaining machinery and knowing the fire danger ratings before using equipment is also important.

“The taller and drier the grass, the quicker the fire will move and the more intensely it will burn.

“A grass fire can cut roads and threaten property with very little warning and can move up to three times faster than a bush fire.

“If you live in or nearby areas where there is grasslands, have a plan for what you’ll do in a fire.

“Make or update your bush fire survival plan and discuss it with your family and loved ones. There’s a guide to help you available from www.myfireplan.com.au or from your local Fire Control Centre.

“We’re also advising motorists to avoid driving through or stopping in long grass, even if it’s just for a few minutes, as the heat from a car’s exhaust can be enough to start a fire.

“It is important that everyone understands the risks of grass fires and prepares for it, whether you’re on the land, in town or just travelling through,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.