

# MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## Firefighters train to fight fires from the sky

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Residents of NSW will benefit from having well trained aerial firefighting specialists at their disposal following a major NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) training exercise in Orange this weekend.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said around 80 volunteers and eight aircraft will be involved in the intensive training ahead of the upcoming bush fire season.

“These freshly trained and prepared aerial firefighting specialists from the NSW RFS and the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be on hand to support volunteers on the ground with water bombing and reconnaissance.

“The unprecedented rain we’ve had in recent years has led to an increase in fuel loads throughout the State, particularly grass growth.

“This grass and vegetation has already started to dry out and the recent bush fire at Bulli Tops in the Illawarra region is a good example of how important aerial resources are in helping to bring fires burning in difficult terrain under control.

“This practical training is based around some challenging real life scenarios including a simulated grass fire, fire in threatening a house in the hills and an aircraft accident,” said Deputy Commissioner Rogers.

During the exercise trainees will fine tune their skills in navigating to water bombing sites, calling in water bombers, dropping foam and running an airbase.

“Water bombing is particularly useful at the moment because so many fires are starting in wet, boggy ground - making it hard for some fire trucks to gain access.

“The aerial firefighting specialists will also be taught how to co-ordinate reconnaissance, aerial ignition techniques as well as transport and airbase management services.

“These roles are vitally important to help us combat fires as quickly and efficiently as possible. Aerial specialists are also used during hazard reduction burns to ignite and monitor fires from the air.

“This large-scale, multi agency training exercise would not be able to take place without the support of the Orange City Council and their Airport Management, who are both very supportive of our training,” said Deputy Commissioner Rogers.

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