



MEDIA RELEASE

Hazard reduction burns and smoky conditions to continue across the weekend

20 May 2016

Fire agencies are reminding residents that as they continue to undertake essential hazard reduction burns, smoke will impact many areas.

NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said 70 controlled burns are scheduled to take place across the next few days, with smoke expected to settle in some areas.

“The NSW RFS, National Parks and Wildlife and Forests NSW are making the most of the current weather conditions to burn close to 6,000 hectares of potentially hazardous bush fire fuel,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“The controlled burns in locations including the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Central Coast, Hunter Valley, Wollondilly and Queanbeyan, will undoubtedly generate a level of smoke haze.

“We work very closely with the Bureau of Meteorology to ensure that the burns are undertaken in the most suitable conditions, but with limited windows of opportunity we simply have to reduce the fuel by controlled burning as and when the weather permits.”

With smoke predicted to settle across the Sydney Basin, residents are reminded to take sensible precautions. The NSW RFS advises people affected by smoke to keep doors and windows closed, ensure pets have protected areas, bring washing indoors and drive according to smoky conditions.

“Anyone with respiratory conditions such as asthma are particularly encouraged to refer to their asthma plan and seek medical advice as appropriate,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“The media plays an important role by helping us notify the broader community about these controlled burns, and I ask that the message continues to be relayed. We need to keep people abreast of when and where this necessary work is being undertaken so that residents are better equipped to prepare themselves and their families.

“I also urge everyone to keep themselves up to date with our hazard reduction burning schedule by visiting the NSW RFS website, social media sites or via the Fires Near Me App’.

The NSW RFS is also reminding people to only call Triple Zero (000) if they see an unattended fire.

A list of scheduled hazard reductions is available on the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/hr. Traffic information is available at www.livetraffic.com.

Smartphone owners can download the free *Fires Near Me* app, which displays the location and status of current hazard reduction burns and bush fires across NSW.