



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Landholders urged to exercise caution before burning in current climate

**19 July 2018**

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is urging land managers and landholders undertaking hazard reduction to carefully consider current weather conditions after firefighters across the state had to be called to contain and extinguish escaped hazard reduction burns during the past week.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said hundreds of firefighters have attended a number of escaped hazard reduction or pile burns in areas including the Bega Valley, Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, Northern Tablelands, New England, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee.

In the past fortnight, NSW RFS crews have been called to at least 142 reported escaped or illegal landowner burns across the state.

“Given the dry and windy conditions are forecast to continue over many parts of the state for the next few days, it is vital that landholders only light up when it is safe to do so,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“We have also received many reports about people lighting up without providing proper notifications and carelessly allowing burns to escape.”

Landholders who fail to notify firefighters and neighbours face fines of up to \$5,500 and/or 12 months jail while escaped fires attract penalties of up to \$110,000 and/or five years prison.

“The dryness of the landscape and the lack of rain is worrying, especially when you take into account the number of hazard reduction burns that had to be postponed during the past two years due to unfavourable weather conditions,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“With the Bush Fire Danger Period fast approaching, beginning on 1 August in some areas in the state’s north, I encourage everyone to start preparing their property now, including checking and maintaining your firefighting equipment, and to make or update your bush fire survival plan.”

Information about hazard reduction burning and required notifications is available on the NSW RFS website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP).

**For interviews, please contact your local Fire Control Centre.**