

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

NSW RFS urges vigilance as bushfire season ramps up

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New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said NSW RFS crews have responded to almost 160 bush and grass fires across NSW this week alone.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said the fire activity in the state this week is a timely reminder to residents of how quickly bush and grass fires can take hold, even if it has been raining in some areas.

"Following wet weather it can only take a few days of warm and windy weather for the landscape to become susceptible to fires.

"Our volunteers have worked in very challenging conditions this week, with some fires threatening properties, in a number of locations around the state.

"Crews have responded to particularly bad bush and grass fires in areas like the Blue Mountains, South-Western Sydney, Hunter Valley and Wagga regions.

"This week is a clear reminder that fires can take hold and spread very quickly. It is essential that people living in bush fire prone areas have an up to date Bush Fire Survival Plan and stay aware of local conditions," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

The Bureau of Meteorology confirmed in their revised summer forecast this week that the La Nina weather pattern means there is an increased chance of above average rainfall this summer, but that does not mean people can afford to become complacent.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said the drought breaking rainfall of the last 18 months has resulted in grass growth levels that have not been seen for 30 to 40 years in NSW.

"Once this grass cures and dies, it becomes a fire hazard and no amount of rain will bring dead grass back to life."

"Grass fires are dangerous because they can start easily and spread rapidly, catching people off guard."

"Whether you live, work or travel through bush fire prone areas it is essential that you know what you will do in the event of an emergency," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

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