



# State Bush Fire Plan

**A Sub Plan of the  
State Emergency Management Plan**

**Endorsed by the  
State Emergency Management Committee**

**December 2017**

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accordingly printed plans may be out of date.*

*The current plan is always available at  
[www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)*

**Title:** State Bush Fire Plan

**Purpose:** This document has been prepared to inform the prevention, preparation, response to and the initial recovery arrangements for Class 2 & 3 bush and grass fires in New South Wales.

**Prepared by:** NSW Rural Fire Service

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# Section 1 - Introduction

## Purpose

1. This plan is the New South Wales (NSW) State Bush Fire Plan. It covers the whole of NSW including Lord Howe Island.
2. This plan describes the arrangements for the control and coordination by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner for the response to Class 2 & 3 bush and grass fires, including those managed under the provisions of section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, and the provisions for emergency warnings at all classes of fires.
3. These arrangements ensure that the two combat agencies, NSW RFS and Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW), are able to manage small scale bush and grass fires, utilising assistance from the other fire-fighting authorities being the National Park & Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW).
4. This plan has been prepared by the NSW RFS at the direction of the NSW State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) as a sub-plan of the State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN).

## Objective

5. The objective of bush fire management in New South Wales is to reduce the impact of bush and grass fires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industry, agricultural assets, the economy and the environment.

## Principle

6. The protection of human life (both community and emergency services personnel) and the environment takes priority above all other obligations detailed in the plan.

## Section 2 - Prevention/Mitigation

7. NSW has a number of initiatives and controls that are consistent with the COAG commitment to building more resilient communities. Provisions focus on three areas:
  - a) ensuring that new development is designed, constructed and maintained to minimise bush fire risk;
  - b) to mitigate and manage bush fire risk to life, property and the environment given existing development (patterns); and
  - c) engaging with the community to develop improved understanding of how they should prepare for and respond to bush fire.
8. Substantial legislative provisions exist for the prevention and mitigation of bush fires - this plan does not repeat or describe those provisions, although a summary of key elements is provided below.
9. Proposals for development in bush fire prone areas are assessed by the NSW RFS for bush fire risk, and conditions imposed to mitigate that risk to an acceptable level. There is particular focus on residential premises, and those particularly vulnerable to bush fire such as schools, hospitals, aged care facilities defined within the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* and *Rural Fires Act 1997*.
10. There is a formal mechanism for the public to report bush fire hazard complaints regarding land in their vicinity. Hazard complaints and strategic fire trails are managed by the NSW RFS Commissioner across the State, who has the power to require the land owner/manager to remove the hazard, and to actually carry out the work if the land owner/manager fails to do so.
11. The safe use of fire is regulated by the NSW RFS through the requirement for fire permits and implementation of total fire bans (TOBANS). A bush fire danger period is declared (usually from the beginning of October to the end of March in most areas), during which specific bush fire precautions apply.
12. The NSW RFS & FRNSW control the risk of bush fires from accidental causes through the use of a fire permit system during this period. The Minister or NSW

RFS Commissioner may declare a Total Fire Ban on days during which the risk of bush fires is especially high.

13. The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) established by the *Rural Fires Act 1997* has an integrated bush fire risk management planning scheme that includes the preparation of bush fire risk management plans by local BFMCs throughout NSW.
14. These plans identify bush fire risks to assets (life, property and the environment), assign them a relative risk ranking, and identify treatment options required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
15. These plans are known as Plans of Operation and Bush Fire Risk Management Plans which are prepared by BFMCs.
16. Plans of Operations record local coordination arrangements for agencies involved in bush fire operations whilst Bush Fire Risk Management Plans identifies the level of bush fire risk across respective areas, records treatment strategies and associated responsibilities.
17. Within NSW all land owners/managers are obliged to take all practical steps to prevent the occurrence and spread of bush fire on/from their land. The NSW RFS Commissioner has the power to require land owners/managers to undertake bush fire hazard reduction, and may carry out the work (and recover the cost), if the owner fails to do so.
18. The NSW RFS manages a number of bush fire mitigation funding programs, using both Federal and State funds. These programs are used to supplement the works otherwise undertaken by land owners/managers.
19. Arson and ignition prevention strategies are developed by the Bush Fire Arson Task Force (State) and Inter Agency Arson Working Groups (District).
20. The NSW RFS conducts regular community engagement including an annual public information campaign prior to, and during the bush fire danger period. The campaign provides advice on measures that individuals, business and communities can take to prepare for a bush fire and where they can seek additional information.

21. The NSW RFS and FRNSW produce an extensive suite of guidelines and public information to support individuals, business and the community prepare and address the threat of bush and grass fires. They are available at the NSW RFS website.

## Section 3 - Preparedness

### Responsibilities

22. There are two services responsible for fire suppression in NSW being the NSW RFS and FRNSW. These two agencies are supported by NPWS and FCNSW known as fire-fighting authorities.
23. The NSW RFS is responsible for the response to and management of fires in rural fire districts, and FRNSW for fires within fire districts, under the provisions of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and the *Fire Brigades Act 1989* (FB Act). The EMPLAN identifies NSW RFS and FRNSW as combat agencies, reflecting these legislative responsibilities.
24. In addition, section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* requires the NSW RFS Commissioner to take charge of all bush fire-fighting operations and bush fire prevention measures anywhere in NSW if, in the Commissioner's opinion, certain conditions are met.

*“ 44 (1) The Commissioner is to take charge of bush fire-fighting operations and bush fire prevention measures and to take such measures as the Commissioner considers necessary to control or suppress any bush fire in any part of the State if, in the opinion of the Commissioner:*

- (a) a bush fire has assumed or is likely to assume such proportions as to be incapable of control or suppression by the fire-fighting authority or authorities in whose area or locality it is burning, or*
- (b) the prevailing conditions are conducive to the outbreak of a bush fire likely to assume such proportions, or*
- (c) a bush fire is not being effectively controlled or suppressed by the fire-fighting authority or authorities in whose area or locality it is burning, or*

*(d) a bush fire is burning in a place that is not the responsibility of any fire-fighting authority ....”*

25. Section 9 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* provides that the NSW RFS is responsible for issuing public warnings and alerts about bush fires and bush fire threats in NSW for the purpose of protecting life and property, irrespective of jurisdictional area.
26. The combat agency with jurisdictional responsibility controls and oversees the response to fires and coordination of fire-fighting, with the exception of Class 2 and Class 3 (Section 44 declarations). This includes the activities of other fire-fighting authorities.
27. Other agencies may assist with response and associated operations, such as evacuation & public information, through the provision of staff and resources.
28. General responsibilities of emergency services and functional areas participating and supporting agencies are set out in EMPLAN and may be supplemented through individual agreements.

## **State Capability**

### State Operations Centre

29. NSW RFS maintains the State Operations Centre (OpsCen) and State Air Desk (SAD) at the NSW RFS Headquarters.
30. This facility serves as the primary State level operations and information centre for bush and grass fires. It operates continuously 24 hours a day, with staffing levels determined by fire conditions.
31. FRNSW maintains a permanent presence in the OpsCen within a dedicated area known as the Bush Fire Incident Co-ordination Centre (BICC). FRNSW staffing in the BICC is increased when significant bush fire activity is forecast or occurring. Personnel from NPWS and FCNSW are also represented in the OpsCen during these times.
32. The State Operations Controller (SOC) oversees activity within the OpsCen and performs a number of functions on behalf of the NSW RFS Commissioner. State Operations personnel provide advice and assistance to the NSW RFS



Commissioner and also provide advice, assistance, direction and arrange the supply of resources to Incident Management Teams (IMTs) as required.

33. The SOC specifies the state-wide operational readiness levels at local/district, regional and state levels, based on a combination of fire danger rating and the level of fire activity. These arrangements provide for small scale incidents to be managed at a local level, with increased involvement of regional and state level as conditions dictate.
34. The SOC also provides the combat agencies and functional areas with an overview of the current state-wide situation, a general focus for local activities, key actions being implemented at state level, key resources likely to be available and command, control, and communications arrangements at state level.
35. NSW RFS prepares and maintains staffing rosters for key roles in the OpsCen to ensure that adequately trained and experienced personnel are available when required.
36. The OpsCen has work space allocated for a number of emergency service organisations and functional areas for use in the event of major bush fire conditions. These agencies include the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), NSW Police Force (NSWPF), NSW Ambulance Service (NSWAS) and several utility and support organisations.
37. The functions of the SOC include:
  - Facilitate incident information and briefings for the Minister, NSW RFS Commissioner, other fire-fighting authorities, SEMC members, media and other agencies;
  - Operational and pre-emptive support including incident IMT personnel, aviation support and fire-fighting resources;
  - Co-ordinate NSW RFS assistance to other combat agencies under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*, and to other states, territories or overseas, upon request;

- Ensure the dissemination of weather intelligence, specifically Catastrophic fire weather forecasts and Total Fire Bans under s99 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*;
  - Provide advice regarding declarations under s44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*;
  - Provide overall direction and support for fire control activities;
  - Escalate the level of control of a bush fire, or the overall control of bush fires across an area, where required; and
  - Maintain state wide situational awareness.
38. Specialised services that may be facilitated through the OpsCen during major operations include:
- Analysing and predicting bush fire behaviour;
  - Providing, co-ordinating and supporting aviation, heavy plant and specialised fire-fighting team operations;
  - Organising travel, accommodation and support for operational personnel;
  - Providing or arranging logistical support for major incident operations;
  - Liaising with relevant external agencies, utilities and authorities;
  - Liaising with international and interstate/territory fire-fighting and supporting agencies;
  - Liaising with the Australian Defence Force and federal agencies;
  - Facilitating purchases and contracts to support operational activities;
  - Administering finances associated with operational activities;
  - Coordinating bush fire (cause and origin) investigation activities;
  - Initiating the investigation of significant accidents during operations;
  - Identification and tasking of aircraft to support fire-fighting operations

### Incident Management Facilities

39. Fire-fighting agencies have established and maintain premises and facilities to enable incident management teams to operate effectively to control and coordinate bush fires throughout NSW. These are known as Fire Control Centres (FCC) of which there are over 75 across the State.

### Fire-fighting Resources

40. NSW RFS, FRNSW, NPWS and FCNSW maintain fire-fighting capability to meet anticipated needs, including trained personnel for fire-fighting and specialist roles, logistics and supply arrangements, fire-fighting equipment and qualified Incident Management personnel.
41. Interoperable fire-fighting resources from multiple agencies and from other jurisdictions is facilitated through multi agency training and exercising in conjunction with nationally aligned qualification and common incident control systems known as the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS).
42. Arrangements are in place with other States and the Commonwealth to provide resources for support, when needed, on an agreed basis. The SOC co-ordinates the deployment of NSW personnel and resources to other jurisdictions.
43. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and border liaison arrangements with other agencies in neighbouring jurisdictions (eg. QLD, VIC, SA, ACT and the Jervis Bay Territory) are in place to ensure smooth integration of fire-fighting operations in the vicinity of, and across, borders.
44. The NSW RFS, along with other fire-fighting authorities, are signatories to the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC) and Arrangements for Interstate Assistance (AIA). The NSW RFS co-ordinates any interstate/international deployments for bush fires on behalf of NSW agencies.

### Specialist Resources

45. The BoM is contracted by the NSW RFS to provide special fire weather forecasting services and maintain a permanent presence in the OpsCen.

46. The NSW RFS engages other specialist resources, on a contractual basis. These include resources from aviation operators, heavy plant and equipment operators, and transport, accommodation and logistics organisations. Some of these are on contract for the duration of the fire season, and some are obtained on a “call-when-needed” basis.
47. The SAD is located within the OpsCen and provides aircraft dispatch and management for fire operations. The SAD also provides aircraft for other government purposes (eg supporting the NSW State Emergency Service for flood response, Department of Primary Industry for plague locust control).
48. The SAD arranges logistical support for the aircraft, including fuels, retardants and suppressants, ground crew and specialist in-air personnel (such as air observers and air attack supervisors).

#### Operational Communications

49. The NSW RFS maintains and manages an on-line computer-based incident management application system, known as ICON. This system provides the primary means of exchanging operational information between the OpsCen, district and regional offices, and IMTs. This system is the single source of information relating to bush and grass fires in NSW which informs situational awareness and public information platforms.
50. It is available wherever an internet connection is available, and is accessible to authorised personnel who require access, irrespective of their agency. As this system links to the NSW RFS public website, it is critical that all incident information for bush/grass fires is entered into the ICON system.
51. The NSW Government operates an integrated radio communications network comprising strategic, tactical and task appropriate platforms, using Government Radio Network (GRN), Private Mobile Radio (PMR) & Very High Frequency (VHF) systems. It enables communication between a range of NSW emergency services and support agencies.
52. Supporting agencies are expected to utilise their own internal communications systems when supporting bush fire operations. Local communications arrangements between the fire services and government land managers with

fire-fighting capacity are described within local plans of operations prepared under the provisions of s52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* by BFMCs.

## **Evacuation Planning & Management**

53. The *Evacuation Management Guideline* endorsed by the SEMC and *Community Safety & Co-ordinated Evacuations Policy* endorsed by the Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC) inform evacuation arrangements during bush fires.
54. Evacuation arrangements are developed and recorded within local EMPLANs, prepared by Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs). The plans cover assessment of the circumstances potentially triggering evacuations, the operational arrangements for managing these, evacuation routes, and evacuation centres.

## **Neighbourhood Safer Places**

55. Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) are places of last resort for people whose personal bush fire survival plans are either overwhelmed or by circumstances which prevent implementation.
56. NSPs are designated and sign posted, and a register of these is maintained by the NSW RFS. This list, in addition to further information about NSPs, is accessible to through the NSW RFS website.
57. As NSPs are a place of last resort, emergency management or functional area support will not be available.
58. The NSW RFS undertakes annual inspections of designated NSPs to ensure their ongoing suitability, and may require bush fire hazard reduction work to be carried out to protect them.

## **Public Information & Media**

59. The NSW RFS provides fire safety awareness training and accreditation to media personnel to enable them to operate safely in the vicinity of bush fires.
60. The NSW RFS, in co-operation with other agencies, co-ordinate bush fire safety information, engagement activities and public awareness campaigns relating to bush and grass fires.

61. The NSW RFS may establish a joint media information centre drawing personnel from participating and supporting agencies during periods of significant fire activity.
62. The NSW RFS provides a single source of bush/grass fire information across the State through the NSW RFS public website and social media platforms, regardless of which agency is combating the fire. Incidents entered into the ICON system will be displayed on the NSW RFS website and Fires Near Me application.
63. Bush and grass fire activity as listed on the NSW RFS website will have one of the following alert levels prescribed: Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning.
64. The NSW RFS is responsible for issuing advice (including Emergency Alert) for any fire at Emergency Warning level that must be telephoned through to the OpsCen.
65. Notification should also be provided when fires have the potential to:
  - Impact on either life or property;
  - Generate a large amount of public enquiries; or
  - Impact of major arterial roads/highways or other infrastructure.
66. Facilities for the media are provided within the OpsCen to ensure the timely provision of public information and safety messages to the community during bush/grass fires.
67. The Public Information Functional Area Co-ordinator (PIFAC) and member agencies may be called upon to assist during times of prolonged or significant fire activity.
68. A 24 hour Bush Fire Information Line (BFIL) is maintained at the OpsCen.

## **Operational Readiness & Debriefing**

69. The NSW RFS conducts annual state and regional exercises to test multi-agency operational and coordination arrangements.
70. Prior to the commencement of the bush fire danger period, the NSW RFS co-ordinates multi agency pre-season briefings at local, regional and State levels.

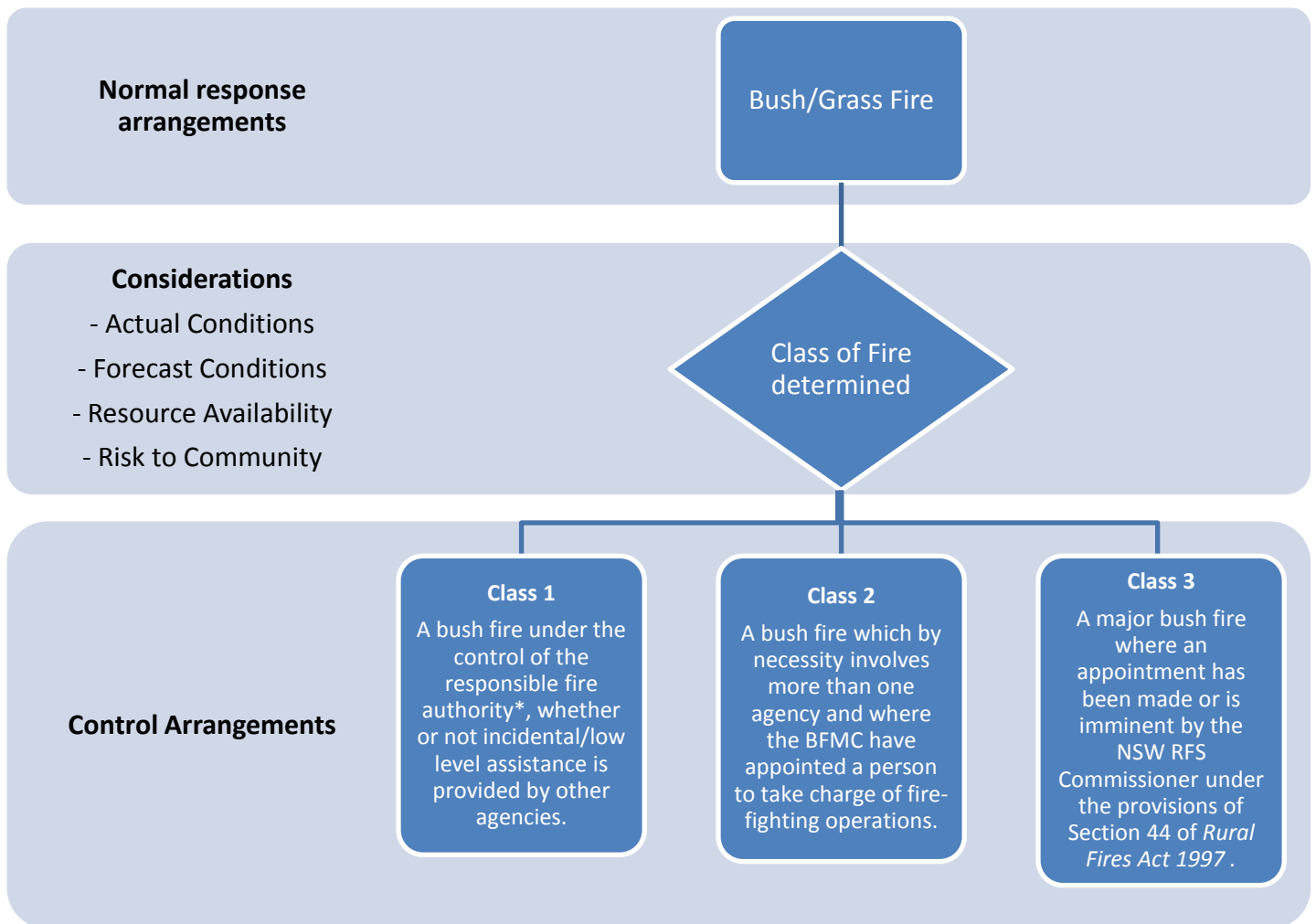
71. After action reviews and debriefings following incidents are also conducted to assess the adequacy of coordination arrangements and operational readiness. Outcomes are collated by the NSW RFS to facilitate continuous improvement.

## Section 4 - Response

### Concept of Operations

72. The NSW RFS is responsible for the response to and management of fires in rural fire districts, and the FRNSW for fires within fire districts.

73. In addition, the NSW RFS Commissioner will take charge of bush fire-fighting operations anywhere in NSW if, in his/her opinion, certain conditions set out in section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* are met.



\*responsible fire authority includes NSW RFS, FRNSW, NPWS and FCNSW

74. Involvement of personnel from agencies other than the fire service in charge of a fire is at the discretion of that fire service notwithstanding legislative authority/requirements.
75. All personnel operating on a fire ground are subject to the direction of the IC, irrespective of their source agency. The IC is subject to the direction of the relevant fire service Commissioner through the established chain of command.
76. Members of the NSWPF are required to recognise and support the authority of the fire service Commissioners, members of the NSW RFS and FRNSW acting under the Commissioners' directions, and officers in charge at incidents, when people or property are being threatened by fire. Members of the NSWPF have discretionary powers within other legislation.
77. Personnel on IMTs and fire grounds must be trained, experienced and capable of fulfilling the role to the satisfaction of the fire service in charge of the fire. Operations are to be conducted in accordance with procedures determined by the fire service in charge of the fire having regard to any prepared BFMC Bush Fire Risk Management Plan or Plan of Operations.
78. Activities undertaken by agencies are to be funded in line with existing agency management funding arrangements.
79. Where practicable, the normal procedures within respective agencies are to be used for the acquisition and supply of goods and services.
80. If a requirement for goods and services is beyond the resources of individual agencies, the matter is to be referred to the SOC in the first instance who may engage the SEOC to assist in accordance with arrangements outlined in the EMPLAN.

## **Incident Response**

81. Appropriate resources are responded to reports of fire in accordance with jurisdictional responsibilities and in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and local Mutual Aid Agreements between NSW RFS and the FRNSW.



## **Appointment of Incident Controller**

82. An IC is appointed by means of established standing arrangements through the fire service chain of command, or directly appointed by the NSW RFS Commissioner where he/she has taken charge under the provisions of s44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.
83. Where a s44 declaration is made, the NSW RFS Commissioner may establish an alternate management structure depending on the complexity and/or number of fires.
84. The actions of the IC are monitored by the next layer in the chain of command, who may intervene if considered those actions are inadequate to the situation. Except during periods of a s44 declaration, the fire service with jurisdictional authority maintains responsibility for management of the incident.
85. The IC is responsible for forming an IMT, as required, and may seek assistance from the SOC/Region Major Incident Co-ordination (MIC) to source additional personnel/resources if sufficient are not locally available.
86. The NSW RFS Commissioner, on his/her initiative or on advice from the SOC, an IC or a local BFMC, and based on observations and predictions, may take charge under the provisions of s44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

## **State Operations Centre**

87. NSW RFS will contact supporting agencies and organisations to request their presence in the OpsCen, when required.
88. The OpsCen will disseminate advice and information to ICs. MICs and IMTs such as forecast weather, aerial line scan images, fire spread predictions and situational information.

## **Fire Danger Ratings, Fire Weather Warnings & Total Fire Bans**

89. Fire Danger Ratings are produced by the BoM in consultation with the NSW RFS. These are distributed within the fire services, other emergency services, functional areas and to supporting agencies, and communicated to the community through a variety of mediums, including the media, NSW RFS website, 1800-Bush Fire Information Line, social media and roadside signs.

90. Fire Weather Warnings (FWW) are issued and disseminated directly to the media and all emergency services by the BoM.
91. Total Fire Bans (TOBANs) are issued by the NSW RFS Commissioner, under delegation from the Minister and disseminated to the media and relevant stakeholders.
92. Fire Danger Ratings and descriptors are detailed below:

<b>Catastrophic</b>	These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from bush fire prone areas.
<b>Extreme</b>	Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and come from many directions. Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bush fire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety.
<b>Severe</b>	Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety.
<b>Very High</b>	If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety. Be aware
<b>High</b>	

<b>Low-Moderate</b>	of how fires start and minimise the risk. Controlled burning may occur in these conditions if it is safe.
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## Emergency Warnings and Public Information

93. Emergency warnings for bush fires are issued by the NSW RFS. The need for public messages and emergency warnings is assessed by the IC, in consultation with the SOC. The SOC monitor conditions to ensure the need for public warnings is being identified and that those warnings are issued in a timely manner.
94. Warnings and messages will be in accordance with NSW RFS policy and procedures and the National Framework for Scaled Advice and Warnings to the Community.
95. The NSW RFS has responsibility for the issuing of Emergency Warnings, regardless of jurisdiction, for all bush and grass fires.
96. All media and public information for bush and grass fires with an 'Advice' or 'Watch and Act' alert level are co-ordinated by the combat agency, however information will be made available at a State level through ICON and the NSW RFS public website.
97. Emergency Warnings and descriptors are detailed below:

<b>Advice</b>	A fire has started – there is no immediate danger.
<b>Watch &amp; Act</b>	A heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing; you need to start taking action now to protect yourself and your family.
<b>Emergency Warning</b>	You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

## **Assistance and Additional Resources**

98. Additional fire-fighting resources may be sourced locally or from adjoining areas. When local resources are insufficient or unavailable, requests for additional support will be co-ordinated by responsible fire authority (Class 1).
99. If resource requests cannot be met using this arrangement, or where the bush/grass fire is being managed in accordance with Class 2 or 3 arrangements, requests will be directed to the OpsCen for action in consultation with all fire-fighting authorities.
100. Resources from external supporting agencies may be requested directly at any level (local, regional or state) as per existing emergency management arrangements.
101. Requests for interstate assistance are made by the relevant fire Commissioner (or nominee) directly to interstate fire services, under existing MOU arrangements.
102. Requests can be made to the NRSC who can co-ordinated support through the AIA process.
103. Outside of local arrangements, the NSW RFS Commissioner may request the provision of assistance from the Australian Defence Force through the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC), if required.

## **Provision of Specialist Resources**

104. The decision to deploy or withdraw state resources (such as aircraft) is made by the SOC, in consultation with the IC and Region MIC. This includes requests from other fire-fighting authorities.
105. Dispatch of aircraft for reconnaissance, line scanning, and/or fire-fighting is normally on the request of an IC to the SAD, however can be requested by the SOC and Region MIC where multiple fires are identified.
106. Aviation and other resources may be mobilised by the SOC on his/her own initiative if the need for an urgent response is evident; the IC will be advised of such mobilisation as soon as practicable.

107. Personnel trained in fire investigation and damage assessment are maintained by NSW RFS and FRNSW. Fire investigation and damage assessment personnel are deployed by the SOC as required during major bush fires. In particular, the SOC will co-ordinate fire investigations for all fires declared under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

108. The NSWPF is responsible for the co-ordination of search and rescue, disaster victim registration and disaster victim identification activities.

### **Restriction of Access and Security**

109. The IC is responsible for determining whether to restrict access to an area unless a crime scene is declared after which the NSWPF is responsible.

110. Media access to the fire ground is at the discretion of the IC. However, the default position is to allow access to accredited media wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and identification unless a significant risk or extenuating circumstances exists.

111. The NSWPF will assist the NSW RFS and FRNSW in restricting access to areas at-risk during a bush fire event.

112. The NSWPF will coordinate the security of supply lines and evacuated/damaged areas.

### **Evacuations**

113. Evacuation is a risk mitigation strategy that may be used to mitigate the effects of an emergency on a community. The decision to evacuate is complex and requires careful consideration to ensure residents are not placed at greater risk.

114. Decisions to undertake planned evacuations/relocations will be made by the IC and where possible, in consultation with the NSWPF and/or relevant Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON). The actual activity is co-ordinated by the NSWPF and/or LEOCON.

115. Irrespective of this arrangement, the NSWPF always has discretion to undertake emergency evacuations at any time if considered necessary (pursuant to section 60L of the *State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989*).

116. The NSWPF will liaise with prior to, or inform the IC at the earliest opportunity of any evacuations/relocations carried out to ensure a co-ordinated approach and the safety of residents.
117. Evacuation Centres and evacuation trigger points should be included in BFMC Bush Fire Plans of Operations and Local EMPLANS.
118. The LEOCON may be requested to carry out and/or co-ordinate supporting arrangements arising from any evacuation. The IC will notify the LEOCON if such support (eg. evacuation centres, animal care) are likely to be required.

### **State of Emergency**

119. The NSW RFS Commissioner provides advice to the relevant Minister, who then advises the Premier as to the need for declaration of a State of Emergency under the provisions of the *State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989*.

### **State Emergency Operations Centre**

120. The OpsCen disseminates information to SEOC (for the SEMC) and the relevant Minister on behalf of the NSW RFS Commissioner.
121. At times of significant bush fire activity, the SEOC will monitor bush fire operations and keep members of the SEMC informed, by distributing NSW RFS situation reports and other operational information. It will assist the SEOCON to coordinate support to the fire services.

## **Section 5 - Recovery**

122. Recovery arrangements are detailed in the NSW Recovery Supporting Plan.
123. The responsibility for the overall coordination of recovery operations in NSW rests with the State Emergency Recovery Controller (SERCON).
124. Recovery Committees may be established at the State, regional or local level depending on the scale and severity of the bush fire.
125. Recovery operations will often begin while the response phase is still underway. The fire service in charge will regulate access to the fire ground

and provide information and assistance to recovery organisations, with a view to the earliest possible commencement of recovery operations.

126. In the event of a significant bush/grass fire, the LEOCON will work closely with the IC to complete an impact/damage assessment which will be utilised by the SERCON to determine the level of recovery required.

127. The NSW RFS will work closely with the NSWPF when undertaking investigative and damage assessments to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

128. The NSW RFS will make available appropriate information and advice to the SERCON and Local Government to assist in Natural Disaster Declarations determinations.

# Acronyms

AIA	Arrangements for Interstate Assistance
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
BIA	Bushfire Impact Analysis
BICC	Bushfire Incident Coordination Centre (FRNSW)
BFCC	Bush Fire Coordinating Committee
BFIL	Bush Fire Information Line
BFMC	Bush Fire Management Committee
BoM	Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
EMPLAN	State Emergency Management Plan
FB Act	Fire Brigades Act 1989
FCNSW	Forestry Corporation New South Wales
FRNSW	Fire & Rescue New South Wales
FWW	Fire Weather Warnings
GRN	Government Radio Network
IC	Incident Controller
ICS	Incident Control System
IMT	Incident Management Team
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
LEOCON	Local Emergency Management Controller
OpsCen	NSW RFS State Operations Centre
MAA	Mutual Aid Agreement



MIC	Region Major Incident Co-ordination (NSW RFS)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSP	Neighbourhood Safer Place
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
NRSC	National Resource Sharing Centre
NSWAS	NSW Ambulance Service
NSWPF	NSW Police Force
PMR	Private Mobile Radio
NSW RFS	NSW Rural Fire Service
SAD	State Air Desk
SEMC	State Emergency Management Committee
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Centre
SEOCON	State Emergency Operations Controller
SERCON	State Emergency Recovery Controller
SEWS	Standard Emergency Warning Signal
SOC	NSW RFS State Operations Controller
TOBAN	Total Fire Ban
VHF	Very High Frequency