



David Elliott
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday, 31 May 2020

NSW GEARS UP FOR THE NEXT BUSHFIRE SEASON

The NSW Government has bolstered support for the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) with more than \$45 million in additional funding to fast-track hazard reduction and upgrades to firefighting capability, as the State prepares for the 2020-21 bushfire season.

On top of a record firefighting budget, this funding boost includes \$10.7 million for additional State Mitigation Crews to fast track the State's hazard reduction program burning as well as a \$34.4 million investment to upgrade the RFS firefighting fleet.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said despite the 19-20 'Black Summer' bushfires burning more than five million hectares of land, there was still more to be done to prepare for the season ahead.

"The \$10.7 million for hazard reduction will create an additional 100 jobs, forming 25 crews from Albury to Armidale which will support and supplement volunteers and fast-track hazard reduction," Mr Elliott said.

"The \$34.4 million investment in the RFS fleet will also help expedite essential upgrades and the rollout of new vehicles to brigades who need them most, delivering 120 new and 70 refurbished trucks by then end of next financial year (2020-21).

"We want our volunteers to have the very best equipment available to them when they put their lives on the line to keep the community safe. This investment in fire trucks will also create hundreds of manufacturing jobs for regional economies which have been hit hard by drought, fire and now a global pandemic."

NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers said a better prepared community was a more resilient community.

"Since their establishment over a decade ago, State Mitigation Crews have provided valuable assistance to brigades in helping to reduce the impact of a potential bushfire," Mr Rogers said.

"Bringing these additional 100 crew members on board enables us to expand on this important work, in particular increasing our capacity to conduct burns during the week when volunteers are at work.

“We continually see how our firefighters work to keep us safe when disaster strikes, and we have a responsibility to ensure they have access to the very latest and safest equipment. This funding boost means the NSW RFS can continue to provide its volunteers with a modern, safe and fit-for-purpose firefighting fleet.”

Rural Fire Service Association President Brian McDonough said the extra funding was a great recognition by Government of the tireless work of volunteer firefighters.

“The Association has been pressing the case for extra investment in our firefighting fleet, and we’re delighted that the Government has not only listened to the needs of volunteer firefighters, but delivered,” Mr McDonough said.

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