



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NSW RFS DECLARES BUSHFIRE DANGER PERIOD

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Tuesday the **1<sup>st</sup> of October 2024** will mark the official start of the Lower Western statutory Bush Fire Danger Period (BFDP) with the RFS urging residents to ensure they are as prepared as possible.

Lower Western District Manager Superintendent Steve Walker is reminding Wentworth and Balranald Shire residents that fire permits will be required throughout the Bush Fire Danger Period.

“With hotter, drier and windier conditions comes an increase in the occurrence of fires within the landscape. If your preparations include the use of fire, a permit will be required. In addition, you must provide 24 hours’ notice to both the RFS and adjoining landowners of your intentions”.

As of this year, we’ve modernised the way Fire Permits can be obtained with a new functionality enabling online Fire Permit applications. Members of the public can now apply for a Fire Permit, apply for a Total Fire Ban (TOBAN) Exemption and Notify of TOBAN exempt works, through an easy-to-use online portal accessible on the RFS website. This new portal simplifies the process, enabling the public to register for an account where they can view, track and manage these activities online in a single space. Furthermore, in the event of a Total Fire Ban declaration, affected permits will be automatically suspended and permit holders notified.

Residents should check both current and forecast weather conditions before lighting up and ensure they are complying with all conditions stated on their fire permit. Severe penalties apply for breaching these conditions or allowing fire to escape from your property.

We’re urging all residents throughout the zone to be vigilant and extremely careful with fire over the coming months. This includes having a well-rehearsed Bush Fire Survival Plan and being ready to act in the event of fire threatening their home or livelihood.

It’s important the community are alert to their local risks and know where to get timely and relevant information, so we’re also urging residents to download the NSW RFS Hazards Near Me App to stay up to date with current incidents that may be nearby.

When conditions are particularly bad, such as on days of High, Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Danger, the NSW RFS may declare a Total Fire Ban prohibiting the lighting of any fire, or having an existing fire in the open, even if you have a current fire permit. This includes incinerators and barbecues which burn solid fuel such as wood or charcoal, however, gas or electric barbecues are permitted under the following conditions:

- They are on residential property within 20 meters of the house or dwelling, or in a picnic area and the BBQ appliance is approved by Council, National Parks and Wildlife Services or State Forests
- They are under the direct control of a responsible adult
- The ground around a barbecue is cleared for 2 meters of all ignitable material
- You have an immediate and continuous supply of water at your disposal

If the community have any questions whatsoever, they can contact the Lower Western Zone Fire Control Centre during standard business hours for assistance.