



# Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday, 13 September 2019

### **HAWKESBURY COMMUNITY GETS READY FOR A TOUGH BUSH FIRE SEASON**

As more than 50 fires continue to burn across NSW, Member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston MP has encouraged all residents who live near bushland and areas prone to grass fires to start preparing for the bush fire season.

Ms Preston said 'Get Ready Weekend' on 14-15 September is a great opportunity for families to get to know their local firefighters and find out about the fire risk in their area.

Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott said NSW had already seen how quickly fires can develop and threaten homes and lives over the past week.

"The State's own permanent 737 Large Air Tanker (LAT) the *Marie Bashir*, which touched down just weeks ago, and has already flown 59 missions and delivered more than 880,000 litres of water and retardant."

"The first step to keep your family and property safe is knowing your bush fire risk, which your local brigade can help you assess."

"RFS volunteers are an invaluable source of knowledge and can provide advice on preparing your bush fire plan, preparing your property and planning with neighbours."

This weekend RFS volunteers will host more than 600 events, including demonstrations, workshops and displays, at brigade stations and community events.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said recent research showed that 67 percent of people living in bush fire prone areas have some sort of plan for what to do during a fire, but it is worrying that a third of people have not even talked about it.

"Research shows that while two thirds of people surveyed acknowledged that it is their responsibility to get ready for bush fires, nearly half of people have not taken any steps to protect their home," Mr Rogers said.

"With 95 percent of NSW drought affected and a forecast of ongoing dry and warm conditions, we're facing a potentially long bush fire season – so now is the time to get ready."



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Every resident in NSW should take four crucial steps to keep their families and property safe from bush fire:

1. **Discuss** what to do if a bush fire threatens your home
2. **Prepare** your home and get it ready for bush fire season
3. **Know** the bush fire alert levels
4. **Keep** all the bush fire information numbers, websites and Fires Near Me smartphone app handy

Disaster assistance is also now available for communities in Armidale, Clarence Valley, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha Local Government Areas that have been affected by bush fires since 31 August 2019.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444 from 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. To apply for a concessional loan, grant or freight subsidy, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au).

RFS brigades will be taking part in more than 640 events for Get Ready Weekend, with a range of displays, demonstrations and activities for families. Find out more about local activities at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/get-readyw](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/get-readyw).

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