



# **Mike Baird MP**

## **Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Infrastructure**

### **Minister for Western Sydney**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Thursday 29 May 2014

### **NEW LAWS TO PROTECT PROPERTY FROM BUSHFIRES**

Residents will be given additional powers to protect their homes from bushfires, with new laws being introduced into NSW Parliament today to make it easier to clear trees and vegetation from around a property.

NSW Premier Mike Baird, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres and Minister for Planning Pru Goward announced the measures today along with NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers and Blue Mountains MP Roza Sage.

“We saw last summer how devastating bushfires can be, which is why we are removing regulatory obstacles on homeowners who want to take sensible steps to protect their properties from bushfires,” Mr Baird said.

“The new rules will ensure we cut green and red tape for residents whose homes are located in designated areas close to bushland, so they can clear trees and vegetation from their property.

“Under the proposed new laws people with homes in a bushfire zone will be able to clear trees within 10 metres of their house.

“They will also be able to clear shrubs and other vegetation, except for trees, within 50 metres of their home.

“We have worked closely with the RFS to develop these new rules which will empower landowners who are taking responsibility for minimising the fuel loads near their homes – a key fire prevention goal.”

Mr Ayres said the locations of the designated bushfire zone areas – known as a ‘10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement area’ - will be determined by the RFS.

“Last bushfire season more than 200 homes were destroyed by bushfires and more than 100 houses damaged,” Mr Ayres said.

“It is imperative that the NSW Government gives landowners the powers they need to protect their properties from the risk of bushfires, while balancing legitimate environmental objectives.

“The RFS Commissioner will determine where the 10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement areas are and these areas will be shown on a map published on the RFS website.

"I also encourage all homeowners to complete a *Bush Fire Survival Plan*, which can be downloaded from the RFS website.

Minister for Planning Pru Goward said the new rules will also apply to non-residential buildings in designated bushfire zones.

"The NSW Government is ensuring we provide additional protection to people in these designated areas, which is why these new laws will also apply to other facilities deemed high risk.

"Under these changes staff at facilities including schools, child care centres and hospitals in designated zones will also be able to remove trees and vegetation that pose a bushfire risk from their property."

RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers has welcomed the new laws.

"We need to ensure the community is as prepared as possible for bushfire and these changes will give residents the flexibility they need to clear their property from bushfire risk," said Mr Rogers.

"A well prepared property, along with a completed *Bush Fire Survival Plan*, can minimise the risk of loss of life and property."

A map of the 10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement areas will be published once the new laws come into force.

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