



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# FARM FIRE UNIT PROJECT

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# Why Farm Fire Units?

- It all began with Farmers
- Expertise in Land Management
- Sir Ivan Fire 2017
- Relationships are very poor in some areas (Farmers, Brigades, Districts)

# What is a Farm Fire Unit?

Farm Fire Units are defined as;

- Vehicles and equipment or machinery (including tankers) owned or operated by landowners or community members that may be used to help contain, suppress or reduce the effects of a fire

# Farm Fire Unit Project

- Operational Guide, Flyer and Commitment are finalised
- Legal work completed around personal protection and liability
- RFS working with NSW Transport on privately owned unregistered vehicles – Review Service Standard 5.3.3

# How are Farmers Covered?

The Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987

## Who is covered by the scheme?

- NSW RFS members; and
- non-members (including FFU operators) engaged in fighting a bush fire **with the consent of, or under the authority and supervision of, a NSW RFS officer.**

# Priorities

## Private Vehicles

- NSW RFS, Transport NSW and other relevant Government agencies to work on issues around the use of private fire vehicles eg conditional registration, safety and liability
- Review *NSW RFS Service Standard 5.3.3 Annual Inspection of Unregistered RFS Vehicles, Trailers and Plant* and progress any required changes.



The NSW RFS recognises that in many parts of the state our NSW RFS resources are supported by the use of private equipment, including Farm Fire Units (FFUs), to fight and contain fires.

Safety at fires is **everyone's responsibility**, and the NSW RFS is committed to working with property owners and community members to ensure we can **manage fire together** in a safe and coordinated way.

### PREPARE



- Know your local Brigade and how to contact them.
- Have your PPE readily available during fire risk days.
- Ensure your farm fire unit is working, safe and legal.
- Check your pumps, hoses and firefighting equipment.
- Brigades should get to know their local landholders and their firefighting capacity.

### COMMUNICATE



- If a fire starts, call Emergency Triple Zero (000).
- If safe to do so, assist and keep small fires small.
- Speak to the first arriving fire crew.
- Move to a local UHF channel as agreed, keep contact.

### INTEGRATE



- Talk to Brigade Officers and share local knowledge. Collaborate on the plan.
- Inform firefighters about what's important to you on your property.
- Follow the plan and direction of firefighters to keep each other safe.
- Don't forget to tell someone if you leave the fireground, go home or go to get water.
- Brigades should keep FFU operators informed on operational and safety issues.



It's everyone's responsibility to keep each other safe on the fireground, including landholders, farmers and firefighters.

For more information on Fire Fire Units visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/farmers](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/farmers) or contact your local fire control centre



[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

# FARM FIRE UNIT OPERATIONAL GUIDE







## A COMMITMENT FOR STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE NSW RFS AND FARMING COMMUNITIES

- Rural and farming communities were instrumental to the formation of the NSW RFS - and a strong and trusting relationship is critical for the ongoing safety of the community, and the future of volunteering in many areas.
- NSW RFS intends to strengthen relevant and meaningful relationships with NSW farming communities.
- The intent is to identify a way forward that promotes a shared understanding, collaboration and respect for rural communities, and recognising the important work that farmers do in the management of fire.
- Trusting and ongoing relationships with farmers and NSW RFS are critical to ensuring safer communities.

### OBJECTIVES

- Improved collaboration and communication during emergency events
- NSW RFS to work with farmers and their communities across NSW to develop a shared understanding of risk, response plans and capability
- NSW RFS Districts and Brigades to effectively engage with farmers and always promote locally led ideas and solutions

### COMMIT

- Establish a formal commitment piece with representative bodies
- Identify priority areas of focus for the development of mutually beneficial projects and initiatives
- Publicly launch and share the commitment across NSW (e.g. branding and application to relevant programs)

### PARTNER

- Understanding our past to enable our future
- Leverage and enhance existing engagement, including through BFCC and BFMCs
- Establish agreed process to bring together knowledge, to develop, formalise, endorse and prioritise programs (statewide and local)
- Develop a shared strategy to communicate initiatives and benefits

### OUTCOMES

- Strong, trusted and sustainable relationships at all levels, that deliver meaningful outcomes for the community
- Across NSW RFS Districts and Brigades, people understand their role, contribution and value to the community
- Transparency of what we have committed to do, what we have done and what was the result

### INITIATIVES

#### STATEWIDE

- Deliver agreed initiatives such as Farm Fire Units and Rural Liaison Officers
- Jointly develop and endorse a state level engagement strategy
- Review and measure outcomes of engagement activities
- Develop a framework to support local initiatives and engagement
- Explore opportunities to develop alternative membership models to further engage landholder membership
- Agree on future operating model for incident management to meet farmer and RFS needs

#### LOCAL

- Strengthen local engagement through BFMCs
- Prioritise the attraction and retention of local membership
- Develop local engagement plans

# Benefits of the NSW Farmer relationship

- NSW Farmers have significantly led with NSW RFS on the FFU Project and Commitment
- Increased farmer engagement across NSW, with much more to come
- Working towards collaborative leadership and direction from all levels – Brigade, Districts, Areas and State HQ