



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

JULY 2018

➤ Aboriginal Communities Engagement Strategy

This strategy aims to deliver a program of activities and supporting resources that reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies on aboriginal communities. These will be developed and implemented in partnership with aboriginal people, elders, traditional owners, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, and NSW RFS Members.

➤ The Strategy

Exploring the issue with stakeholders identified a number of initiatives to reduce risk of fire in aboriginal communities. Delivering these initiatives and supporting members to implement the activities is critical to the success of the NSW RFS Fire Ready Aboriginal Program.



➤ Get Ready Aboriginal Communities Program

Activities that focus on Aboriginal communities form part of the Get Ready Aboriginal Communities Program. Arranged in an order from Level 1 to 4 activities, the level provides an indication of the reach and effectiveness of the activity.

ACTIVITIES

Higher reach Lower effectiveness		Lower reach Higher effectiveness		
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	
Public Information	Community Relations	Behavioural Interventions	Community Development	Community Liaison
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aboriginal Protocol, Guidelines and Communications Plan ➤ Guideline: Aboriginal culture and fire management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aboriginal Employment Pathway ➤ Local Partnerships with Local Aboriginal Lands Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secondary School Cadet Program for Aboriginal Students ➤ Community Protection Plans: Building Resilience in Aboriginal Communities V5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Firesticks Cultural Burning Partnership ➤ Hotspots for Aboriginal Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Action Plans ➤ Community Field Liaison

ISSUE	INITIATIVE	2018-19 DELIVERABLES	2022 OUTCOME
Recognition Recognising aboriginal custodianship of land and heritage of land management through fire	Celebrate Recognition Deliver an Aboriginal Protocol, Guidelines and Communications Plan that celebrates our relationship with First Nations People and their heritage.	Protocol, policy, guidelines, communications plan and associated resources.	Our members, stakeholders and aboriginal communities expect, appreciate and are proud of adherence to the Protocol.
Skills to Burn Providing knowledge and skills to Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and Corporations to effectively managed land through the use of fire and gain the ecological and agricultural benefits of fire as a tool.	Hotspots Delivered over a series of workshops, Hotspots brings together the skills of fire managers, ecologists and agronomists to support farmers developing and implementing a property management plan.	Deliver facilitators guide and supporting resources.	>95% of Hotspots program attendees develop and share their property fire management plan.
Risk Management on Aboriginal owned land Participation of Local Aboriginal Land Councils in Bush Fire Risk Management Committees is relatively low considering land under their management.	Active Engagement Establishing strategic partnerships between districts and Local Aboriginal Lands Councils to develop mutual understanding, appreciation, engagement and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidance ➤ Mentorship ➤ Advocacy. 	Local Aboriginal Lands Councils participate in 50% of Bush Fire Risk Management Committee meetings by 2022.
Remoteness There are a number of isolated discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW that are at a high risk of bush fire.	Resilience in Aboriginal Communities The Bush fire Resilience in Aboriginal Communities program has successfully implemented years of risk reduction activities in isolated communities focused on mitigation works. aims to take an All Hazards approach and consider social preparedness and emergency planning through tailored Community Protection Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnership with OEM and Agencies ➤ Facilitators Handbook ➤ Remote Communities Database 	35 identified isolated and discrete Aboriginal Communities have developed Community Action Plans and Liaison Officers in place by 2022.
Empower Communities Some communities already have significant strengths they can build on to increase preparedness and resilience.	Get Ready Communities A community-led program to supports communities to enquire into their risk and develop local solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliver facilitators guide and supporting resources. ➤ Conduct pilot trial and establish monitoring and evaluation framework. 	Get Ready Communities demonstrate a recognition of risk and undertaking of preparedness action at >10% higher than other similar communities.
Local Knowledge Residents hold valuable local knowledge, particularly in times of emergencies but regularly feel unheard following fires.	Rural Liaison Deploy Rural Liaison Officers as well as Community Field Liaison to provide a conduit between the community and Incident Controllers.		The deployment of Field Liaison Officers for major fires has been normalised and community sentiment improves to reflect increased communications.
Training and Employment Aboriginal communities are seeking opportunities that empower their members to care for country and provide employment opportunities.	Aboriginal Membership Pathway Create a clear pathway for people to engage with the NSW RFS, gain skills and employment in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secondary School Cadet Program resources ➤ Aboriginal SMSS Scheme 	Employment of aboriginal Australians in NSW increased to 3% Schools located near the 35 identified remote aboriginal communities to be targetted for the Secondary School Cadet Program
Cultural Burning Aboriginal communities hold a valuable fire management culture that can be constrained by contemporary processes.	Supporting the growth of cultural fire knowledge Partner with people, stakeholders and communities that wish to maintain and enhance the use of Cultural Burning practices to mitigate fire risks on land managed by Traditional Owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cultural burning and risk management guidelines ➤ Scholarship scheme for NSW RFS members to enhance cultural burning skills 	NSW RFS members are informed and knowledgeable supporters of aboriginal cultural burning practices within their communities

Aboriginal communities at a glance



33% of National Aboriginal population live in New South Wales.



34% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are 14 years and under.



120 Local Aboriginal Lands Councils across NSW



35 Remote Aboriginal Communities within NSW RFS jurisdiction



Remote Aboriginal Communities in NSW

The NSW RFS focusses on two aspects of the aboriginal community in NSW in order to identify, understand and tailor communication and engagement to at-risk communities.

Remote aboriginal communities: There are 35 isolated, discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW and many are at a high risk of bush fire. The population of these communities are almost 100% indigenous.

The NSW RFS also uses Mosaic segmentation to identify the at-risk element of the aboriginal community. Within Mosaic, the **Remotely Blue (M)** segment has been identified as an at risk sector that contains a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities across NSW.

Method

The NSW RFS Community Engagement Team use the **TESTER** Framework to develop and implement these targeted engagement strategies. This strategy represents the output of the 'target' and 'explore' phases. As programs are delivered they will be rigorously trialled before expanded and reviewed for ongoing continuous improvement. To find out more and view the Behavioural Insights Toolkit visit MyRFS.

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