

# TOTAL FIRE BANS IN NSW

Fact Sheet 6 – Community Risk Management 24.8.2005



- NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
- NSW FIRE BRIGADES

## FACTS

Bushfires are more likely to spread and cause damage on days when the weather is very hot, dry and windy. These are very high to extreme fire days. Total Fire Bans are declared on these days to reduce the risk of fires damaging or destroying life, property and the environment.

## What is 'A Total Fire Ban'?

During a Total Fire Ban, no fire may be lit in the open. Fire permits are suspended during a Total Fire Ban. The ban applies to incinerators and barbecues which burn solid fuel, such as wood and charcoal.

You may use a gas or electric barbecue, but only if...

- It is on a residential property within 20m of the house or dwelling
- It is a picnic area and the appliance and area are approved by council, National Parks or State Forests
- It is under the direct control of an adult
- The ground within 2m of the barbecue is cleared of all materials which could burn
- You have an immediate and continuous supply of water available

## When is a Total Fire Ban Declared?

For public safety, a Total Fire Ban is declared for days when fires are likely to escape and be difficult to contain. Extreme fire danger is caused by a combination of dry vegetation and hot, dry, windy weather.

The Bureau of Meteorology provides advice on forecast weather conditions and fire danger ratings during the Bushfire Danger Period.

The NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner declares Total Fire Bans based on this advice and other information. This decision is generally made at around 5pm each afternoon during the Bushfire Danger Period and the Total Fire Ban applies for the following day, starting from midnight and lasting 24 hours.

The RFS Commissioner is also responsible for exemptions to Total Fire Bans. A range of activities may be exempt from Total Fire Bans, such as emergency infrastructure work or ceremonial fires. These are detailed in the NSW Government Gazette each time a ban is declared. The gazetted exemptions are also on the RFS website, [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au).

## How to Find out Where and When a Total Fire Ban is Declared?

Check what NSW Fire Area you are in by using the map on this fact sheet. Total Fire Bans are declared according to NSW Fire Areas, which include a number of Local Government Areas with similar weather, terrain and fire management issues. You can then check if a Total Fire Ban applies by:

- Calling 1800 NSW RFS (1 800 679 737), a free number which includes statewide recorded Total Fire Ban information
- Checking the RFS website Current Fire Danger and Total Fire Ban map on [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- Checking weather reports on the radio, TV and in newspapers
- Calling the local RFS Fire Control Centre during office hours
- Contacting your local NSWFB Fire Station.

**A collaboration of the NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Rural Fire Service,**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION OR FIRE CONTROL CENTRE  
or visit: [www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

## What are NSW Fire Areas?

Since August 2004 a new process for declaring Total Fire Bans and delivering fire weather information has been used. The declarations were previously based on Bureau of Meteorology Weather Forecast Districts. Declarations are now based on NSW Fire Areas. NSW Fire Areas are smaller and based on local government area boundaries. This means fire weather information and Total Fire Bans are more specific to local conditions. To find out what NSW Fire Area you are in, check the map attached to this fact sheet.

## Fines and Penalties

Lighting a fire on a day of Total Fire Ban attracts a fine of up to \$5,500 and/or 12 months gaol. Penalties for a fire that escapes and damages or destroys life, property or the environment can attract much greater fines and gaol terms with maximums at \$110,000 up to 14 years. Civil law suits can also be brought against the person responsible for a fire by those seeking compensation for losses sustained.

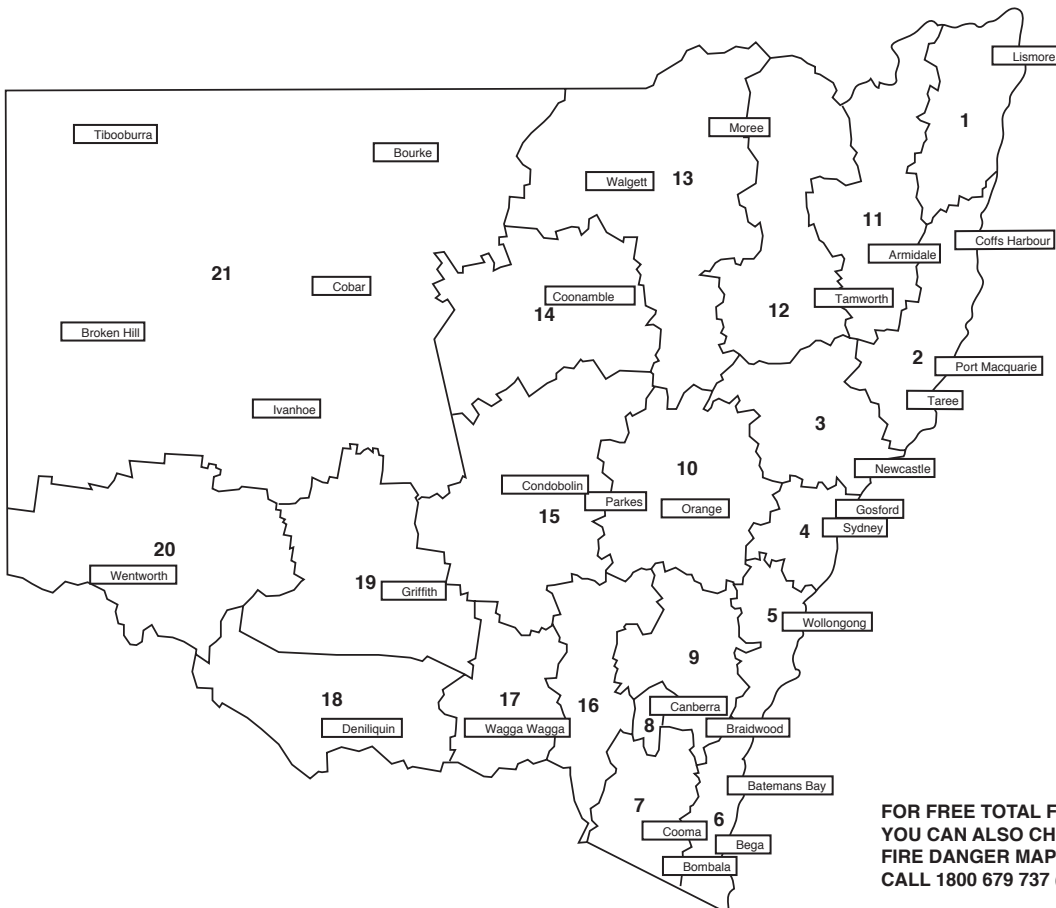
<b>1 FAR NORTH COAST</b>
Ballina Byron Clarence Valley Kyogle Lismore Richmond Valley Tweed
<b>2 NORTH COAST</b>
Bellingen Coffs Harbour Gloucester Great Lakes Greater Taree Hastings Kempsey Nambucca
<b>3 GREATER HUNTER</b>
Cessnock Dungog Lake Macquarie Maitland Muswellbrook Newcastle Port Stephens Singleton Upper Hunter
<b>4 GREATER SYDNEY REGION</b>
All Sydney Metropolitan Councils plus Gosford, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Wyong
<b>5 ILLAWARRA/SHOALHAVEN</b>
Kiama Shellharbour Shoalhaven Wingecarribee Wollondilly Wollongong

<b>6 FAR SOUTH COAST</b>
Bega Valley Eurobodalla
<b>7 MONARO ALPINE</b>
Bombala Cooma Monaro Snowy River
<b>8 ACT</b>
Australian Capital Territory
<b>9 SOUTHERN RANGES</b>
Queanbeyan Upper Lachlan Yass Valley Palerang Goulburn Mulwaree
<b>10 CENTRAL RANGES</b>
Bathurst Regional Blayney Cabonne Cowra Lithgow Mid Western Regional Oberon Orange
<b>11 NEW ENGLAND</b>
Armidale Dumaresq Guyra Glen Innes/Severn Tenterfield Uralla Walcha

<b>12 NORTHERN SLOPES</b>
Gunnedah Gwydir Inverell Liverpool Plains Tamworth Regional
<b>13 NORTH WESTERN</b>
Moree Plains Narrabri Walgett Warrumbungle
<b>14 UPPER CENTRAL WEST PLAINS</b>
Bogan Coonamble Gilgandra Warren
<b>15 LOWER CENTRAL WEST PLAINS</b>
Bland Dubbo Forbes Lachlan Narromine Parkes Temora Weddin Wellington
<b>16 SOUTHERN SLOPES</b>
Boorowa Cootamundra Gundagai Harden Tumbarumba Tumut Young

<b>17 EASTERN RIVERINA</b>
Albury Coolamon Greater Hume Junee Lockhart Wagga Wagga
<b>18 SOUTHERN RIVERINA</b>
Berrigan Conargo Corowa Deniliquin Jerilderie Murray Urana Wakool
<b>19 NORTHERN RIVERINA</b>
Carrathool Griffith Hay Leeton Murrumbidgee Narrandera
<b>20 SOUTH WESTERN</b>
Balranald Wentworth
<b>21 FAR WESTERN</b>
Bourke Brewarrina Broken Hill Central Daring Cobar Unincorporated NSW

# NSW FIRE AREAS



## THE AREAS USED FOR TOTAL FIRE BANS

To help prevent fires starting and spreading, you need to know the rules about using fire during the Bush Fire Danger Period, including getting fire permits and Total Fire Ban declarations.

The process for declaring Total Fire Ban uses NSW Fire Areas.

NSW Fire Areas are smaller and based on local government area boundaries, so fire weather information is more specific to local conditions.

Find out which NSW Fire Area you are in by checking this map.

Total Fire Ban announcements are made in newspapers, on radio and TV. Or call the local RFS Fire Control Centre or Fire Station.

**FOR FREE TOTAL FIRE BAN INFORMATION 24 HRS A DAY YOU CAN ALSO CHECK THE TOTAL FIRE BAN & CURRENT FIRE DANGER MAP ON [WWW.RFS.NSW.GOV.AU](http://WWW.RFS.NSW.GOV.AU) OR CALL 1800 679 737 (1800 NSW RFS)**