

## Information and referral

Information about the program or the effects of critical incident stress is available from CISS team members and the CISS Manager. Critical incident stress awareness sessions can be conducted by CISS team members upon request.

## The team

### Peer supporters

Peer supporters are recruited members of the NSW RFS specially trained to assist and support other members involved in operational critical incidents. Peer supporters work on a voluntary basis and are available to provide a range of services within the program including:

- information/education/awareness about stress, resiliency and recovery
- assessment of the type of critical incident support services available
- provision of on-scene support
- group interventions
- one-to-one assistance.

## Consultants

Consultants can provide a more in-depth assessment or follow-up service. The consultants are specially selected to ensure that they have an understanding of the workings of the NSW RFS and the needs of its members.

## Benefits of the CISS program

This program is a major initiative to extend the support services provided for the members of the NSW RFS.

Critical incident support services are provided to assist in mitigating the impact of traumatic events and to aid the recovery process.

## Requests for assistance

Requests for assistance are welcomed from anyone within the NSW RFS and their immediate family members.

Contact the CISS team  
**1800 049 933**

Ask for the CISS Duty Officer to be paged.



## Critical Incident Support Services (CISS)

*We aim to lessen the impact of critical incidents on all NSW Rural Fire Service members involved*

### NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Head Office 15 Carter Street, Lidcombe NSW 2141  
Locked Mail Bag 17, Granville NSW 2142

Phone 02 8741 5555

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## What is a critical incident?

By the nature of our work, NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) members may be involved in a traumatic event at some time. Such events could include the loss of life or property in bush or structural fires, attendance at motor vehicle accidents, search and rescue operations, or a serious incident involving fellow members. Members are affected differently by incidents as they occur during their service. It is the REACTION of the individual which makes the incident CRITICAL for that person, not necessarily the size or nature of the incident.

## CISS

Critical Incident Support Services (CISS) are available to all members of the NSW RFS who may be experiencing a traumatic or stressful reaction following their operational involvement.

## The key goal

The key goal is to provide a positive way to cope with the effects of dealing with traumatic events and lessening the impact of critical incident stress on members and their family.



## Information and training

Information and training is available on how to manage the effects of a critical incident. Information is also available to the families of NSW RFS members, allowing them to gain a better understanding of critical incident stress and how to manage it.

The likelihood of serious problems building up over a period of time may be reduced when information and support is provided.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained for critical incident support services provided. No information regarding the name, personal reactions, feelings, problems or behaviour of any member will be recorded or disclosed unless; it is required by law, to sustain life, referred to a clinical specialist or it is the expressed wish and with the consent of the individual concerned.

Where group assistance is provided, the agreement of confidentiality commits all participants to maintain the privacy of others in their group.

## Involvement

Members involved in a critical incident will be encouraged (but not compelled) to attend any critical incident support services provided. Attendance will be restricted to those involved in the incident and the CISS personnel. Observers are not admitted.



## Group interventions

### Immediate small group support

Immediate small group support would typically be held within the first 24 hours after an incident and is designed to help reduce stress and tension, to promote a return to normal function and to help prepare participants to seek further assistance if required. It allows initial airing of feelings and the wellbeing of members to be checked.

### Powerful event group support

Powerful event group support would typically be held from 48 hours up to three weeks after an incident with the aim being to help people understand and manage their reactions, thereby accelerating a normal recovery. The emphasis is to help mitigate distress, build resiliency, set appropriate expectations and identify healthy coping resources.

## One-to-one

Any member of the NSW RFS may request confidential one-to-one assistance at any time. One-to-one allows more individual attention and may be via telephone or face-to-face.

## Students enrolled into the program must:

- have an 80 percent attendance record of training sessions and activities over the period of the program
- take part in the practical and theory assessment process and
- be deemed competent by the program coordinator.

All equipment associated with the program is provided by the NSW RFS. Students participating in the program will be outfitted with NSW RFS personal protective clothing and equipment which is returned at the completion of the program.

## Delivery the program

While the program is delivered by NSW RFS members the school is required to support the program by providing supervision during training sessions.

Schools can express interest in running the program by contacting:

NSW Rural Fire Service  
Youth Development Officer  
Phone 02 8741 5555 or  
Email [volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au)



# NSW Rural Fire Service Secondary Schools Cadet Program

*Your time to shine*

**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE**  
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## About the NSW Rural Fire Service

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the world's largest volunteer fire service – our organisation has more than 70,000 hard working, professional and dedicated volunteers in communities right across New South Wales.

Volunteers have been protecting local communities from bush and grass fires for more than 100 years. Today, our volunteers perform a wide variety of roles and attend a range of emergencies like bush and grass fires, house and structure fires, road accidents as well as provide assistance at other events like floods, storms and searches.

We also aim to reduce the impact of bush fires by reducing hazards and educating the community about fire prevention and precautions.



## The Secondary Schools Cadet Program

The NSW RFS Secondary Schools Cadet Program is a great way for students to learn new skills which will last them a lifetime. The program provides Year 9 and 10 students with an insight into fire safety and prevention whilst developing practical life skills and a general appreciation of community service and volunteerism.

The aim of the program is to:

- Develop an interest in the NSW RFS and its traditions
- Provide cadets with a knowledge of fire safety and preparedness
- Develop the qualities of leadership, self-discipline, self-reliance, initiative and team work
- Encourage cadets to continue service in the NSW RFS or other community service organisations
- Provide training that can contribute to NSW RFS firefighter and other specialist training.

These skills can be used in later life, whether it's for work or for joining a volunteer rural fire brigade.

The Secondary Schools Cadet Program can be linked to NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Years 7-10 Syllabus.

*“I have had so much fun with the NSW RFS and have learnt a lot about team work and taking responsibility”*

James Petty – 2010 NSW RFS Cadet of the Year



## Program overview

The majority of the program is based on practical activities however there may be some theory involved. We encourage our members to tailor the program to suit their local community. Typically, the program will run over a 10 week period with 1–2 hours of instruction per week. Below is an example of a 10 week Secondary Schools Cadet Program.

Week:

1. Overview of the NSW RFS and fire behaviour
2. Structure of the NSW RFS, vehicles and familiarisation
3. NSW RFS rank and bush firefighting equipment
4. Emergency services in the local community
5. Bush fire survival plan and emergency drills
6. Casualty assistance
7. Practical scenarios
8. Brigade visits and extinguishers
9. Practical scenarios and revision
10. Final theory and practical assessment and presentation of certificates.

The program is primarily coordinated and delivered by NSW RFS volunteers and therefore the availability of these personnel will determine both the class size and when the program can be held.

Usually class sizes are around 15-20 students; ideally classes will be held midweek in the afternoon (1.00pm to 3.00pm for example).

During the program students will be divided into teams of five to six students, where they will develop leadership and teamwork skills.

## How do I join?

To make an application to join you should contact your local rural fire brigade. If you are not sure where your closest brigade is located or if you would like more information email us at [volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

### Contact details



For more information about the NSW RFS  
visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

*“ It’s a good opportunity to grow, learn things you haven’t learned before and an opportunity to teach others once you’ve learned those skills. ”*



make a difference  
**volunteer with the  
NSW Rural Fire Service**

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Volunteers have been protecting local communities from bush and grass fires for more than 100 years. Today, our volunteers attend a range of emergencies like bush and grass fires, house and structure fires, road accidents as well as provide assistance at other events like floods, storms and searches.

*Our volunteers are ready to respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round.*



## What role can I play?

NSW RFS volunteers are a familiar sight in local communities but there's more to it than just firefighting.

The NSW RFS relies on a team of dedicated men and women behind the scenes, filling important roles in areas such as:

- Administration
- Communications
- Catering
- Community Education
- Community Engagement
- Training
- Operational Logistics Support
- Welfare Support
- Equipment Maintenance.

*No matter what your experience, there's a role for nearly everyone.*

## Volunteer protection

All members of the NSW RFS are protected from legal liability when fighting bush fires, or performing other authorised activities under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. Additionally, all NSW RFS volunteers are covered by the *Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency & Rescue Services) Act 1987* for any injuries sustained while taking part in authorised brigade activities.



## Why volunteer?

There are many reasons why people choose to join the NSW RFS.

Some want to protect their families, their friends, their assets, their community and their way of life.

For many, it's also about being part of a wonderful tradition and an organisation with a very proud history.

Volunteering also offers the opportunity to learn new and valuable skills that will not only assist you in your voluntary role but in day to day life and your workplace. It is also an opportunity to meet people you wouldn't normally meet.

Whatever your reasons, joining the NSW RFS is a great way to give back to your community, learn important life skills and develop friendships that can last a lifetime.

## What you can expect from the NSW RFS?

The NSW RFS provides training and education opportunities to all members free of charge, giving you the knowledge and skills to work safely.

As a Registered Training Organisation, the NSW RFS offers nationally accredited qualifications, which means you can take those qualifications and use them in your day to day life.

The NSW RFS also has a number of flexible training options available for members, including manuals and workbooks that allow for the flexible delivery of training as well as some online options.

Once trained, your brigade will arrange the appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment required for your role.

The welfare of our members is important to us, and we have services in place that support our members and their families.