

Data Sheet 146 (DS 146)

Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service Volunteer Hours

What are we monitoring?

The number of Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteer hours supporting emergency management.

What is the trend?

The number of RFS volunteer hours has increased from 50,973 in 2012 to 71,577 in 2016 (as of July). In 2013, the year of a major bushfire emergency, the number of volunteer hours quadrupled indicating the extent of the response of the volunteer workforce in this major emergency.

The State Emergency Service (SES) provided information that since 2011 there have been approximately 12,000 SES volunteer hours contributed per year. In 2016, 7,000 of these hours were for training. In 2011 there were 15,000 SES volunteer hours contributed due to the Blackheath storm. There was also a spike of hours in 2013, due to the bushfire operations and subsequent clean-up.

Why is monitoring this trend important?

The participation of residents in volunteer emergency management activity is a strong indication of the resilience, strength and social capital of the community. This emergency management volunteer workforce is critical for the Blue Mountains given the large number of natural disasters faced by the City ranging from the continued ongoing threat of bushfires, to storms, flooding and snow events. The October 2013 bushfire event highlighted how invaluable these trained and ready volunteers are in times of emergency.

Number of Hours of Volunteer Participation
in Rural Fire Service Activities

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 YTD
Rural Fire Service Hours	50,973	208,983	48,457	71,577	71,577

Source: Blue Mountains District Manager NSW Rural Fire Service