



New South Wales

Emergency Legislation Amendment (Offences) Bill 1996

Explanatory note

This explanatory note relates to this Bill as introduced into Parliament.

Overview of Bill

The objects of this Bill are:

- (a) to amend the following Acts:
 - the *Bush Fires Act 1949*
 - the *Fire Brigades Act 1989*
 - the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*
 - the *State Emergency Service Act 1989*

to increase the maximum penalty to 50 penalty units (\$5,000) or imprisonment for 2 years, or both, for offences of obstructing certain personnel while they are exercising functions under each Act (for example, fire fighters or members of SES units), and

- (b) in addition, to amend the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* to create an offence of obstructing members of accredited rescue units acting in connection with a rescue operation or otherwise in response to an emergency.
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Outline of provisions

Clause 1 sets out the name (also called the short title) of the proposed Act.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.

Clause 3 is a formal provision giving effect to Schedule 1 which contains amendments to the Acts listed in the overview above.

Schedule 1 Amendment of Acts

Bush Fires Act 1949

Section 55 is amended to increase the maximum penalty for assaulting, resisting, obstructing or using abusive language to (or inciting or encouraging another person to act in such a manner towards) bush fire-fighting personnel from 20 penalty units (\$2,000) or 6 months imprisonment to 50 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment, or both. (Schedule 1.1)

Fire Brigades Act 1989

Section 35 is amended to increase the maximum penalty for obstructing or hindering fire-fighting and associated personnel exercising functions under the Act from 10 penalty units (\$1,000) to 50 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment, or both. (Schedule 1.2)

State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989

Section 40 is amended to increase the maximum penalty for obstructing or hindering certain persons exercising functions under the Act during a state of emergency to 50 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment, or both (the current maximum penalty for the offence being 50 penalty units). (Schedule 1.3 [1])

New section 62B is inserted into the Act to make it an offence to obstruct or hinder a member of an accredited rescue unit acting in connection with a rescue operation or otherwise in response to an emergency (maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment, or both). (Schedule 1.3 [2])

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State Emergency Service Act 1989

Section 24 is amended to increase the maximum penalty for obstructing or hindering emergency personnel exercising functions under the Act to 50 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment, or both (the current maximum penalty for the offence being 50 penalty units). (Schedule 1.4)