

Community Newsletter

Ovens Incident Control Centre

Wednesday, January 8 2020, issued 11am

Fire Update

On December 31, 14 fires were started by dry lightning across the Abbeyard, Buffalo Valley and Buckland areas.

- Two of these fires are not yet under control and have the potential to pose a risk to the communities.
- 6 Watch and Act messages are current.
- Residence are encouraged to continue to monitor conditions and leave if the situation changes or they feel unsafe.
- An Emergency Warning will be issued if the risk to communities increase.

Due to poor visibility aircraft were grounded for most of yesterday, however increased visibility late in the afternoon allowed aircraft to be utilised to gather intelligence of fire activity and spread.

Fire activity is expected to increase over the next few days, with high temperatures and winds forecast for Thursday 9 and Friday 10 January 2020. Fuels are dry and extremely flammable.

Ground Crews and heavy machinery have been utilising the milder conditions to work towards containing these fires by constructing containment lines, considerable work is still required before these fires are contained.

Additional crews and heavy machinery will be deployed over the next few days to help strengthen containment lines.

You should maintain situational awareness at all times. The fire situation can change at any time and it is expected to increase over the coming days.

Many roads in the fire area require safety assessment before they can be open to the public, this includes surface damage and hazardous trees treatment.

Smoke Impacts/Health

Smoke from the fires is causing significant impact for local communities.

The smoke can affect you and your family and it's important that you take action to protect your health. Current smoke levels are at hazardous levels.

Steps to protect yourself from smoke include, removing yourself from the impact area and ensuring you have an asthma management plan and medication on hand.

If you are unable to leave the impact area, stay inside your home, close windows and doors, and reduce your activity. If you must go outside, use a P2 mask.

P2 masks are available for people in need and can be picked up from these Alpine Health Locations.

- Bright Public Hospital, 32-36 Cobden Street
- Myrtleford Public Hospital, 30 O'Donnell Avenue
- Myrtleford Library (Limited), 20 O'Donnell Avenue
- Mount Beauty Public Hospital, 2-8 Hollonds Street

For further information visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au and search 'smoke and your health'.

Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 (this is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health-related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria).

Stock Lost Information

Agriculture Victoria provides technical and decision-making support services to assist livestock owners recover from bushfires.

Agriculture Victoria has technical information and tools on topics such as:

- Stock containment areas
- Assessing sheep after a bushfire
- Assessing cattle after a bushfire
- Horses affected by bushfires
- Assisting livestock affected by a bushfire
- Disposing of carcasses after bushfire

Livestock owners affected by the East Gippsland and North East/Upper Murray fires are being encouraged to report any livestock injuries.

If you have any injured livestock, please report it to Agriculture Victoria on 1800 226 226 so that our animal health staff can assess the livestock. If you have injured pets, please seek advice immediately from your local vet.

Affected farmers can access immediate financial support through both the Victorian Emergency Relief Assistance Payment via the Vic Emergency hotline on 1800 226 226 and the Commonwealth Government's Disaster Recovery Program Payment on 18 22 66.

More information and updates on support services are available on the Agriculture Victoria website at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Relief Centres/Information

For more information on your closest relief centre you can contact the:

Alpine Shire - Great Alpine Road, Bright

Phone: 03 5755 0555

<https://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au/>

Rural City of Wangaratta – 62-68 Ovens Street,
Wangaratta

Phone: 03 5722 0888

<https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/>

Wodonga Council - 104 Hovell St, Wodonga

Phone: (02) 6022 9300

<https://www.wodonga.vic.gov.au/>

Vic Emergency - www.emergency.vic.gov.au.

Road closures

Information on updated road closures is available via 13 11
10 or the VicTraffic website traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Mental health

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions
following a distressing event. There is always help available
through:

Your doctor

Local mental health professionals

[Lifeline](http://lifeline.org.au) - 131 114

[Beyond Blue](http://beyondblue.org.au) - 1300 224 636

[MensLine](http://mensline.org.au) - 1300 789 978

[Kid's Help Line](http://kidsline.org.au) - 1800 55 1800

[Parent Line](http://parentline.org.au) - 13 22 89

Water Management

North East Water is urging residents within the fire affected
communities to conserve water supplies.

Please do not leave sprinklers unattended, especially if you
are evacuating. All water treatment plants are operating, and
water is safe to drink. Visit www.newwater.com.au for further
information.

Useful information

People in affected areas are encouraged to register with the
Red Cross at: Register. Find. Reunite at
<https://register.redcross.org.au/> or by calling 1800 727 077

More information is provided on your local council's website
and social media channels
<https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/>.

Contact VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226) to speak to
someone about recovering. They can connect you with
people who can help.

Stay informed

- www.emergency.vic.gov.au.
- VicEmergency Hotline - freecall 1800 226 226.
- VicEmergency app.
- Facebook or Twitter ([#vicHAZARD](https://twitter.com/vicHAZARD)).
- Tune into ABC Local Radio Stations or Sky News TV

To access this information in other languages, call the
Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 (freecall)
and ask them to call VicEmergency Hotline.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a
speech/communication impairment contact National Relay
Service on 1800 555 677 and ask them to call the
VicEmergency Hotline.

