Fire Situation Update

Total Area of Upper Murray fire – 307925ha

There is increased fire activity, especially in the Dartmouth and Tom Groggin area, due to the elevated temperatures. Fire crews will monitor this and respond as required.

Smoke may be visible in nearby areas for some time.

There is currently no threat to the community.

Hazard tree assessment and treatment continues to be a priority across the fire affected area.

Fire Danger Ratings

Today
Sun 2nd
Mon 3rd
Very High
High
High

Weather

Saturday 1st February

Very hot and humid. Partly cloudy. High (80%) chance of showers in the south, medium (40%) chance elsewhere. The chance of a thunderstorm in the afternoon and evening, possibly severe with heavy rainfall, damaging winds and large hail, most likely over the west.

- Corryong – 24/40 C
- Tallangatta – 23/40 C
- Dartmouth–23/37

Sunday 2nd February

Partly cloudy. High (70%) chance of showers in the morning and early afternoon. The chance of a thunderstorm in the morning and afternoon. Winds west to north-westerly 15 to 20 km/h tending west to southwesterly 15 to 25 km/h during the morning and early afternoon.

- Corryong –14/27 C
- Tallangatta – 15/27 C

Stay Informed during emergencies

- www.emergency.vic.gov.au
- VicEmergency Hotline - freecall 1800 226 226
- VicEmergency app
- Facebook or Twitter #vicfires

Local radio

ABC Radio is the Emergency Broadcaster

- Albury-Wodonga & Wangaratta 106.5FM
- Bright 89.7FM
- Corryong 99.7FM
- Myrtleford 91.7FM

Unattended Campfires

There have been numerous reports of unattended campfires across the state. Most campfires escape when they are left unattended. Never leave a fire unattended, even for a short while. It’s critical to use water to extinguish a campfire using water, not soil as fires can still smoulder.
Roads and Access
The Murray Valley Highway remains open.

The Murray River Road is fully open to the public including the section from the Jingellic Bridge to Guys Forest Road Burrowye.

The Cudgewa Valley Road is fully open from the Murray River Road to the Murray Valley Highway.

The Corryong-Benambra Road remains closed between Staceys Bridge and Benambra.

Several roads remain closed to the public. These roads are labelled 'Category C', continue to have signage at their access points, and are open 24 hours a day to residents and essential services.

The main roads affected are:

- Shelley-Walwa Road between the Murray Valley Highway and Sandy Creek Rd
- Guys Forest Road between the Murray River Road and the Shelley-Walwa Road
- The Benambra-Corryong Road between the Murray Valley Highway and Staceys Bridge.

Several other local roads are still fire affected and remain closed. Follow any directions or signage in the area. Further information is available on the VicTraffic app.

Please drive carefully and observe speed limits.

Current Information on road closures is available at 13 11 70 or on the Vic Traffic website: traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Park Closures
After being assessed as safe to members of the public, the following Murray River Reserves were opened as of 7am on Friday 24 January 2020:

- Burrowye Bend
- Neil’s Bend
- Clarke’s Lagoon Wildlife Reserve
- Lighthouse Crossing

Please adhere to road closure requirements when accessing and using the open reserves.

ALL other reserves in the area remain closed.

For more information on forest access visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Animal Welfare

Livestock

Farmers in need of fodder or agistment should call the VFF on 1300 882 833 to register for assistance.

For urgent animal welfare and needs for pets, horses and livestock including food and water contact 1800 226 226 or visit agriculture.vic.gov.au for more information.

Contact the Towong Shire for assistance with livestock disposal 02 6071 5100.

For more information on bushfire recovery, please contact Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or see agriculture.vic.gov.au/animalemergencies

Wildlife

The animal triage centre in Corryong is now closed. Veterinarian services continue to be available by phone.

Please contact a Wildlife Coordinator at 1300 322 061 if you come across wildlife that appears caught, injured or distressed as a result of the fire. The Wildlife Coordinator will provide further advice about the assessment and appropriate treatment of affected wildlife.

Emergency Stock Water

North East Agriculture Recovery are offering farmers in the North East emergency stock water.

North East farmers requiring access to the emergency stock water can call 0428 975 728 for information.

Relief Centres

Towong Shire Council Offices 9am - 4.30pm
Corryong 76 Hanson Street Corryong
Ph. 02 6076 2160
Email. info@towong.vic.gov.au

Tallangatta 32 Towong Street Tallangatta
Ph. 02 6071 5100
Email. info@towong.vic.gov.au

For more information on forest access visit www.parks.vic.gov.au
Community Support

Support is available through the Towong Shire Council hotline 02 6071 5180. Police Assistance Line on 131 444. Or you can make an online report at www.police.vic.gov.au. If you wish to report a scam or fraud, visit www.cyber.gov.au.

Report suspicious behaviour to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Bushfire Case Support Program

The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program has been launched and is available for people affected by the bushfires in East Gippsland and North East Victoria. Support coordinators will be a single point of contact, linking local residents to vital support – such as information and advice, mental health support or financial counselling, and details of waste handling.

Residents can access service by visiting a local recovery centre or via 1800 560 760 or email bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

Financial Assistance

People seeking financial hardship assistance can call the DHHS hotline 1800 961 054 (9am-5pm). Information regarding financial assistance available to fire affected communities is available at https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#financial_assistance

Victorian Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries

Grants of up to $75,000 are now available for fire affected primary producers.

This program helps pay for the costs of clean-up and other emergency measures including:

- repairing or replacing fencing and horticulture netting
- disposing of dead stock
- rebuilding or replacing damaged or destroyed on-farm infrastructure
- additional labour costs and more

The grants are available to farmers (including apiarists) directly affected by the 2019-2020 bushfire disaster events in 15 local government areas that includes Towong, Wodonga and Indigo. For further information, and to apply, contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425, visit ruralfinance.com.au or email governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Bushfire Clean-Up Program

Registration is now open for the 2020 Clean-Up Program, which is provided free of charge for eligible property owners. Please register using the online form www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program or by calling 1800 560 760.

The 2020 Clean-Up Program covers the demolition and disposal of all buildings destroyed or damaged beyond repair by this season’s bushfires (including residential homes and sheds, commercial and public buildings, and other out-buildings).

This may also include the removal of fencing, trees and vehicles but only where it is necessary for the safe clean-up of destroyed buildings.

Grocon has been contracted to conduct the clean-up on behalf of the Victorian Government. After you register, Grocon will be in contact to discuss arrangements for the clean-up process, which will require the signing of a consent form to proceed.

This is a voluntary program and is provided free of charge for property owners. You do not need to be insured to be eligible for this program.

Public Land Boundary Fence Replacement

Boundary fences adjoining National Parks, State Parks and State Forest:

Forest Fire Management Victoria acknowledges that boundary fences between private property and adjoining National Parks, State Parks and State Forest have been damaged by the recent bushfire in the Upper Murray.

Government will meet half the cost of materials to replace or repair fencing between private land and all National Parks, State Parks and State Forests destroyed or damaged by bushfires.

Landholders may want to start repairing or replacing boundary fences on their properties. Please note that an assessment of the damage must be completed before any payments are made.

For further information please click on the link below: Public Land Boundary Fence Replacement
Has your fencing been affected by the recent bushfires in north east Victoria? If yes, then there are a number of options for assistance.

The Victorian and Commonwealth governments have grants of up to $75,000 available to farmers through Rural Finance to help with the costs of rebuilding, including fences and sheds. For more information visit [www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria)

Need assistance to access grant and other money?
Find out how to get assistance as a family, or individual, including help with grants, insurance, fine, housing, utilities, counselling and more.

See the information above - Bushfire Case Support Program

Farm fencing adjoining state or national parks:
The Victorian Government will pay half of the cost of boundary fencing upgrades, up to $5,000 per kilometre to replace or repair fencing between private land and all national parks and state forests destroyed or damaged by bushfires.

An assessment of the property and the fence damage must be completed before works are undertaken or any payments can be made, and landholders will continue to pay labour costs and half the cost of materials. Landholders can call the DELWP Contact Centre Team on 136 186, Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 6:00pm.

Farm fencing destroyed by firefighting activities:
The Government will continue to pay 100 per cent of the restoration costs of fences damaged on private land as a result of machinery used by fire agencies to control bushfires, or fire agency staff cutting through fences to allow access for suppression efforts.

A dedicated fencing coordinator from DELWP will help landowners decide what option will suit them and arrange payment.

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**Essential Services Update**

**Changes in water quality**

Water users in and downstream of fire-affected areas should be aware of potential changes in water quality in streams following storms or rainfall events.

Rainfall can wash ash, nutrients, organic matter, pathogens and sediment into streams and dams in and downstream of fire-affected areas and can trigger a large flow of poor-quality water into rivers or water storages.

If you’re drawing water directly from streams, monitor your supply source and make alternative arrangements if water quality deteriorates.

Information on water quality and health can be found on the state government’s Better Health channel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please phone us on 1800 013 357.

Remember, water supplied by Goulburn Murray Water is unfit for human consumption, directly or indirectly, without first being properly treated.

**Emergency Water Relief Program**

Bushfire affected residents can seek emergency water. On behalf of North East Water, South East Water are facilitating this program for the North East fires.

Call 131851, and press 9.


**Communications**


**Power supply**

For details - [www.energy.vic.gov.au](http://www.energy.vic.gov.au)
AusNet dedicated line for customers impacted by bushfires 1300 561171
If no fire damage is identified and you do not have power, please call Ausnet Services’ Faults Line on 131799.

Health Impacts

Corryong Health Services are available for health related concerns - 02 6076 3290

Call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 606 024 or see your doctor if you are unwell.

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

Mental Health

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions following a distressing event. There is always help available through your doctor and local mental health professionals. You can call the following for support at any time:

- Lifeline - 131 114
- Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636
- Mens Line - 1300 789 978
- Kid’s Help Line - 1800 551 800
- Parent Line - 13 22 89
- Bushfire Counselling Line – 1300 514 811
- Mental Health Crisis Line – 1300 881 104

Supporting Children

Like any of us, children can feel overwhelmed and devastated when directly affected by bushfires or from the scenes that emerge afterward. Sometimes, they don’t have ways of understanding what they see and can be particularly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, stress and sadness.

At the same time, children can also have a natural ability to be resilient and adapt to challenging events.

Here are some signs to look out for:

- a child becoming more clingy towards a parent or carer – for example wanting to be held more than usual, wanting to be with parents or carers, asking about fire, seeking reassurance
- changes to sleeping or eating patterns, or both
- the emergence of new physical complaints – such as stomach ache or headache
- changes in mood – such as being more easily irritable, or shutting down
- changes in a child’s behaviour or learning at school
- appearing on edge and frightened – for example, being more easily startled, developing new fears, having nightmares or regression in behaviour.

If you (or one of your child’s carers) notice these or other changes then it is important to ask the child what they are worried about. Talk to them in a way that is open and appropriate to their age. Listen to their questions and fears and show them that you understand.

If you are concerned and need assistance you can get help from your doctor, local community health centre, psychologist, **Beyond Blue** Tel. 1300 224 636 **Parentline Victoria** Tel. 13 22 89, Kids Helpline Tel. 1800 551 800, **Lifeline** Tel.131 114, and **NURSEON-CALL** Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours 7 days).

Family Violence

- There is an increased risk of family violence after an emergency. Help is available.