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SEMT Situation Report

Incident	Fires_9 February 2014	
Compiled by	SEMT Situation Report Officer - Lois Holt	
	2014-02-13	09:26:04
Approved by	State Controller - Craig Lapsley	
	2014-02-13	09:40:17
On behalf of	State Emergency Management Team	
Report Number	5	

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Overview

Prolonged dry and hot weather conditions across Victoria over much of January and continuing into February have led to a number of large fires in Gippsland, the Latrobe Valley and Central Victoria. Hot and windy conditions over the eastern two thirds of the State on Sunday 9 February caused a number of new fire starts on Melbourne's urban fringes and increased fire spread in Gippsland. The focus is moving to making areas safe for the return of residents however large fires in Gippsland and Mickleham are yet to be contained.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fires in the Latrobe Valley, the Mickleham-Kilmore fire and the East Gippsland fires are still of concern however fire authorities are continuing to focus on making areas safe for the return of residents. Work is underway to assess and clear dangerous trees, particularly along roads so residents can safely return to their properties. There has been frustration by people at Police preventing entry to fire affected areas; with Police continuing to explain closures/restrictions to the public.

13 significant fires are not yet under control and cover an area of approximately 180,000 hectares. Personnel from NSW, QLD and New Zealand are continuing to assist Victorian fire services across the State.

Watch and Act warnings remain current for the going fires in East Gippsland (Goongerah-Deddick Valley) and Mickleham/Kilmore. Residents in the Mickleham Kilmore area are advised that although the immediate threat has passed, residents should keep monitoring the situation and remain vigilant.

Since Saturday, 11 firefighters have been hospitalised while fighting fires across the State. Overall 15 have been injured with 9 of these relating to carbon monoxide.

The number of homes destroyed since Saturday remains at 34. 17 homes have been confirmed destroyed in the fires north of Melbourne. There are further unconfirmed reports of house losses and numerous other damage reports.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assessments are still underway, where access is possible.

The Gippsland tourism industry report no significant negative tourism impacts, with limited or isolated interruption to normal business at this stage. There may be some perception that the whole state is fire affected

Around 50 roads remain affected by restricted access or lower speed limits. As major roads are reopened, damage on many local roads is subsequently being identified with affected roads being closed.

Three relief centres remained open overnight at Wallan, Seymour and Delegate.

Electricity distributor staff have gained access to most sites and are in the process of assessing and repairing damage. Most customers have been reconnected, however a small number will require more significant repairs leaving a small number of customers without supply for more than 70 hours.

DEECD report a significant reduction in closures of schools (6), early childhood facilities (3) and bus routes (16) for today. In response to smoke issues, arising from the Morwell mine fire, smoke advisory notices developed by EPA and DH have been distributed to affected schools and early childhood facilities.

Significant areas of public land have been impacted by the fires currently burning across the State particularly in the East Gippsland area.

DEPI is reporting some of the current estimates of property and livestock, with an estimate so far of 464 agricultural properties affected in the Mickleham-Kilmore fire which has been 60% assessed. Other fires at Wunghu (120 properties), Sunbury-Dalrymple road fire (57 agricultural properties) and the Morwell-Hernes Oak fire (21 mainly small properties) have also experienced losses of livestock, fencing, pasture, fodder, houses and sheds.

HIGH LEVEL IMPACTS

- Smoke advisory messages have been developed by EPA and DH in response to smoke from the Morwell mine fire and been distributed to schools and early childhood facilities. Air quality remains an issue for schools (3) and early childhood facilities (6) located near the mine.
- Losses of livestock and other animals, fences, pasture, fodder, orchards, homes, sheds in some affected areas is expected to be significant.
- Continued smoke haze over Melbourne and associated media reporting and coverage may impact tourism related businesses.
- Road closures around the State are impacting on the operation of businesses due to inability to move goods in and out.
- Smoke, fire and heat is affecting business productivity, particularly in Greater Shepparton and Benalla.
- Key Activities:
 - Mickleham - Kilmore - Relief centres have been opened at Seymour Basketball Stadium and Wallan Multipurpose Centre.
 - West Gippsland - The Wellington Shire has set up an information recovery telephone line. They can be contacted on 1300 137 218 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.
 - East Gippsland - Delegate Country Club relief centre is open, a community meeting will be held on Saturday 15 February at Club Terrace.

KEY ACTIVITIES

KEY ACTIVITIES**KEY MESSAGES**

- Fire authorities are continuing to focus on making areas safe for the return of residents. Work is underway to assess and clear dangerous trees, particularly along roads.
- Information on relief and recovery, including emergency financial assistance from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments is available at www.recovery.vic.gov.au. People affected by fires can contact the Red Cross on 1800 727 077.
- The rain forecast in the coming days is not expected to have a significant impact on the current fires.
- DEPI are continuing to visit affected properties to discuss livestock welfare needs with landowners and undertake loss and damage assessments.
- If you don't need to be in a fire affected area, please stay away.
- Have access to more than one source of fire information. Tune in to ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV. The Victorian Bushfire Information line can be contacted on 1800 240 667 or visit emergency.vic.gov.au. Download and use the FireReady App and use CFA's Twitter and Facebook accounts to receive updates.

Functional Summaries

The SEMT Situation Report details consequences and significant current and emerging issues and risks to inform the framing of advice and decisions on the whole of government response to an emergency. The information that follows has been directly provided by SEMT member agencies.

COORDINATION - RESPONSE							
Report provided by	VicPol	Approved by	Superintendent Matthew Ryan, SERO	Contact No	0404822800	Date	2014-02-13 07:14:55
Summary	<p>The coordination of Initial Impact Assessments for fires in the footprints of the Benalla and Traralgon RCCs continued throughout 12/2/14. This coordination primarily concentrated on processes, timeliness, and quality control aspects of the IIAs.</p> <p>Contributed to the State Strategic Support Team, focusing on the details and issues coming from the LaTrobe Valley, with particular focus on the congruence of state and local messaging (particularly health messaging), air quality, and the safety of emergency service personnel.</p> <p>On 11/2/14 the Chief Commissioner of Police deployed two VicPol State Emergency Management Teams to assess the effectiveness of control being demonstrated by control agencies. One team has been deployed to the Seymour ICC and the other to the Traralgon RCC and the Hazelwood Emergency Operations Centre (Hazelwood ICC). These teams will report back to the Chief Commissioner by 13/2/14.</p> <p>Police Emergency Response Coordinators in Hume and Gippsland regions are embedded in the REMTs and the IMTs, and are performing their coordination roles.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police coordination remains sustainable. 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SERO has initiated review and improvements in the processes and quality of Initial Impact Assessments. 						

COORDINATION - RELIEF & RECOVERY							
Report provided by	DH/DHS	Approved by	Carmel Flynn	Contact No	0408 567 801	Date	2014-02-13 08:38:44
Summary	<p>Relief centres are currently open at Wallan, Seymour and Delegate, with 34 people staying overnight across these site.</p> <p>Director HHSEM deployed yesterday to assess the demand situation in Wallan. This is being resolved through the deployment of additional staff to the relief centre today.</p> <p>Relief partner agencies are providing food and water, material aid and personal support. Community meetings are occurring as needed.</p> <p>Red Cross are providing first aid, food and water to emergency service at Hazelwood Staging Ground.</p>						

COORDINATION - RELIEF & RECOVERY	
	<p>The Commonwealth DHS is providing support and assistance as required and will continue to monitor and respond as needed.</p> <p>Six recovery centres have been established, a number of community meetings have occurred and further meetings are planned</p>
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions have raised concerns about the psychosocial impacts of the fires, particularly in areas previously affected.
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil to report.

WEATHER							
Report provided by	Bureau Of Meteorology	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

POLICE							
Report provided by	VicPol	Approved by	Superintendent Matthew Ryan, SERO	Contact No	0404822800	Date	2014-02-13 07:22:47
Summary	Police have continued to perform planning, operational, ICC liaison, traffic management point and investigative functions in fire affected areas. These are concentrated in the fire affected areas around Kilmore, Morwell and East Gippsland.						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police in the Sheparton Division (Kilmore fire) and the Gippsland Divisions are far from Business as Usual, with major resources dedicated to the fire response and recovery. 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People have been frustrated by police, in accordance with Incident Controller categorisations, preventing entry to fire affected areas; clarification of purpose to public continuing. Community Safety, including the safety of police and emergency service personnel, is continuously being focused on in and around Morwell. 						

WATER/SEWAGE							
Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

ELECTRICITY/GAS							
							Date

ELECTRICITY/GAS							
Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	Marwa Khalaf	Contact No	0419 162 240	Date	2014-02-13 06:05:45
Summary	<p>Hazelwood has 6 units currently in service. Expect all 8 to be in service by end of Thursday. Yallourn is operating as normal.</p> <p>Distribution: Jemena, SP AusNet and Citipower/Powercor have gained access to sites and are in the process of assessing and repairing damage. Most customers have been reconnected but a number will require more significant repairs and will take more time. A small number of customers will have been off supply for more than 70 hours.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No widespread impacts on the electricity network. 						
Emerging Issues							

PRE HOSPITAL							
Report provided by	Ambulance Victoria	Approved by	Paul Holman	Contact No	0417 346 642	Date	2014-02-12 21:23:20
Summary	<p>AV activity now largely based in Gippsland at open cut mines fires, with Incident Health Commander and Level A PPE response in situ for extended period at ICC request. AEOC and SCC still manned daily for extended hours. ICCs manned at request and for high risk fires. Resources also dedicated to Mt Jersey fire in East Gippsland.</p> <p>Extra ambulance on stand-by for Mickleham-Kilmore fire today.</p>						
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

HEALTH							
Report provided by	DH/DHS	Approved by	Alison McMillan	Contact No	0408 072 150	Date	2014-02-13 08:39:59
Summary	<p>Special arrangements are being put in place around the Hazelwood mine fire. The Gippsland Regional Health Commander (AV) and Regional Health Coordinator (DH) have been actively engaged and an Incident Health Commander is embedded in the leadership control function of the ICC. A Health and Human Services Emergency Management Liaison Officer will be deployed to the ICC for the Hazelwood Fire Incident to support regional arrangements to ensure flow of information and consistency in community messaging. An AV CBR team is in place to support CFA rescue teams.</p> <p>The Chief Health Officer continues to undertake a number of interviews with media throughout metro and regional Victoria in relation to the health effects of bushfire smoke.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health impacts of smoke are affecting a number of areas across the state. 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil to report. 						

FREIGHT, MARINE & TRANSPORT SECTOR COORDINATION							
Report provided by	DTPLI	Approved by	Donovan Croucamp	Contact No	0438 578 477	Date	2014-02-13 06:20:42
Summary	<p>No new impacts to report.</p> <p>Assessment and repairs to existing fire damaged infrastructure are progressing well.</p> <p>Reporting on existing fire damage will transition to the State Recovery Coordination Team.</p>						
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

PUBLIC TRANSPORT							
Report provided by	PTV	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

ROADS							
Report provided by	VicRoads	Approved by	Keith Weegberg	Contact No	0438 767050	Date	2014-02-13 07:08:05
Summary	<p>Over 80 roads have now been affected by the heat and fires in recent weeks.</p> <p>Around 50 roads remain affected with restricted access or lower speed limits. With the opening of several major roads in rural areas, many local roads have been identified and closed due to fire damage. Road inspections and repairs continue as access becomes available.</p> <p>Preliminary cost estimates are also being prepared as access and inspections are being conducted. The damage to road assets had been estimated at over \$500,000 to date. This does not include any costs from the fires in Gippsland where there is some significant works.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 50 roads remain affected by restricted access or lower speed limits • As major road are reopened, damage on many local roads is being identified and the roads are being closed 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some significant damage is being identified as access becomes available 						

EDUCATION							
Report provided by	DEECD	Approved by	JMcKEAGNEY	Contact No	0402309634	Date	2014-02-12 18:06:45
Summary							

EDUCATION	
	As fires are becoming contained, the number of closures of DEECD schools (6), early childhood facilities (3) and bus routes (16) identified for Thursday 13 February has reduced significantly.
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North East - 2 Gvt schools, 2 Catholic schools, 2 early childhood and 12 bus routes North West- 1 bus route (Whittlesea) South East- 1 school (2 campuses), 1 early childhood, 5 bus routes (2 altered) Goongerah and Tubbut facilities remain closed. In response to smoke from the Morwell mine fire, preliminary bushfire smoke advisory developed by EPA and Department of Health on 11-2-14 has been distributed to schools and early childhood facilities
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South East Victoria Region has identified relocation options for students (13) of the Goongerah and Tubbut campuses of Goongerah P-8 school and is liaising with families re these. Air quality issues remain for schools (3) and early childhood facilities (6) located within 2km of the Morwell mine. Region liaising with ICC and DEECD central attending State Strategic Support Team.

ENVIRONMENT							
Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Gary Anderson	Contact No	0414 406 843	Date	2014-02-13 06:24:16
Summary	<p>Fire is impacting significant areas of public land but environmental impacts are not yet known.</p> <p>It is assumed from the areas impacted by the fires that there will be significant impacts on state and national listed flora and fauna species.</p>						
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

PUBLIC LAND							
Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Gary Anderson	Contact No	0414 406 843	Date	2014-02-13 06:32:51
Summary	<p>Significant areas of public land have been impacted by the fires currently burning across the state, particularly in the East Gippsland area.</p> <p>Fire affected areas will remain closed until emergency rehabilitation of roads and tracks and dangerous tree works are completed.</p> <p>Multiple parks have been affected by fire the most recent activity and are temporarily closed / partially closed.</p> <p>Bushfire Rapid Assessment Teams have commenced in the six parks temporarily closed in the Mallee: Wyperfield National Park, Lake Albacutya Park and Bronzewing, Paradise and Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserves remain closed as a result of fire activity from 14 January 2014. Murray Sunset National Park has now re-opened to the public.</p>						
Impacts							

PUBLIC LAND	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not yet possible to ascertain the extent of infrastructure losses, however, substantial damage to tracks, trails, signage, bridges and other minor infrastructure is anticipated. Loss of tourism revenue at Buchan Caves is expected with the closure of the caves and key national parks in the region.
Emerging Issues	

AGRICULTURE/FOOD							
Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Russell McMurray	Contact No	0417 397 297	Date	2014-02-12 18:56:06
Summary	<p>State Agricultural Recovery Centre (SARC) at Attwood are continuing to coordinate agricultural assessments through local centres at Tatura, Traralgon, Bairnsdale and Orbost. Eighteen field teams have been deployed across the affected areas predominately from Attwood (Mickleham-Kilmore complex) and Traralgon for Mt Ray and Morwell Hernes Oak fires.</p> <p>Largest numbers of Livestock impact appear to be in the Mickleham-Kilmore Area with minimal livestock losses reported from Wunghnu complex and fires managed out of the Traralgon ICC. Additionally the expectation is that more losses will be reported from Bairnsdale and in the Mickleham-Kilmore fire where the agricultural impact is expected to be the worst.</p> <p>A fodder distribution program in conjunction with the VFF is close to being finalised.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So far it is estimated 464 ag properties were affected in Mickleham-Kilmore with 60% assessed. Approx 8364 sheep and 277 cattle reported dead & 3019 sheep missing 5 sheds, 274km fencing, 818 ha pasture & 354t of fodder destroyed. At Wunghnu 120 properties have been impacted and contacted. 4 houses, 27 sheds, 411t of hay and 1000t of grain reported lost. 47ha of orchards & 1310 ha of pasture burnt. 100 sheep losses recorded, 1 horse & 3 alpaca. At the Sunbury-Dalrymple road fire it is estimated 57 ag properties were impacted, with few losses reported (25 cattle and 4 sheep missing). 1 house, 10 sheds, 132km fencing & 402t of fodder lost. The Morwell-Hernes Oak fire consist of 21 mostly small properties which have been assessed (5 ha in size), along with a property of approximately 2000 ha. 52 ha of grazing pasture has been lost, 34 k fencing and 3 deer. The Mount Ray – Boundary Track fire destroyed eight residences and seven sheds, along with 41 k of fencing. Ninety cattle were killed and 192 reported as missing, and 186 sheep destroyed. 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Orbost fire areas is limited, with no data available yet, however, intelligence via limited visits and phone contact suggests the 122 known ag produces have been impacted. Staff fatigue is becoming an issue and is being managed by attention to hydration, rest and rostering alternative relief staff. 						

TOURISM							
Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	Stuart Toplis	Contact No	0412 541 460	Date	2014-02-12 18:22:40
Summary							

TOURISM	
	The Gippsland tourism industry are continuing to report no significant negative tourism impacts with limited interruption to normal business at this stage. Isolated impacts are being reported by tourism-related businesses located in the Latrobe Valley, such as booking cancellations due to road closures and smoke. It anticipated that the scale of these impacts will grow if the smoke persists for an extended period. Conference venues in the Lancefield and Romsey areas are reporting booking cancellations and business continuity issues (such as staffing) due to road closures and some fire damage. Tourism Victoria will continue to monitor these impacts and is liaising with local tourism industry representatives on these matters.
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolated impacts are being reported by tourism-related businesses located in the Latrobe Valley, such as booking cancellations due to road closures and smoke. Conference venues in the Lancefield and Romsey areas are reporting booking cancellations and business continuity issues (such as staffing) due to road closures and some fire damage.
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scale of the tourism-related impacts in the Latrobe Valley and the broader Gippsland region will grow if the smoke persists for an extended period. The potential for the closure of the Princes Highway due to the East Gippsland fires, a key element of the Sydney - Melbourne Touring Route. The continued smoke haze over Melbourne and associated media coverage potentially leading to perceptions that the whole State is fire affected.

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY							
Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	Jessica Freame	Contact No	0419 426 757	Date	2014-02-13 06:17:55
Summary	<p>Road closures around the State are impacting on operation of businesses due to inability to move goods in and out.</p> <p>Some cancellation of events in Gippsland due to disruption and uncertainty caused by the fires and smoke.</p> <p>Combination of heat, fire and smoke impacting on business productivity in Greater Shepparton and Benalla.</p>						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bega factory Strathmerton - Sunday had to turn off environmental air handling system as it was drawing smoke into the factory - potential smoke taint issue. Bega factory Strathmerton - 60 min power failure Monday as Powercor replaced power poles. No warning, required complete factory shutdown (4 hrs) to clean and restart rather than controlled shutdown. Concern in Moira that fires have affected the same farming properties that experienced flooding in 2012. 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern there is a perception that all of Gippsland is affected - may need targeted messaging leading up to Easter to avoid mass cancellations in unaffected parts of region. 						

LOCAL GOVERNMENT							
Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	Jessica Freame	Contact No	0419 426 757	Date	2014-02-13 06:09:50
Summary							

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
	Up to 14 LGAs impacted by the fires, with Mitchell Shire indicating Council staff are at full capacity. Awaiting information from other Shires re capacity. Some damage to community infrastructure reported along Latrobe Road, north of Morwell
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to community infrastructure damage reported to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twin Cities Archery Club field damage (estimated \$30,000) Morwell Gun Club damaged or destroyed (TBC)
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some concern re council capacity to manage increased workload.

EMERGENCY CALL TAKING							
<i>Report provided by</i>	ESTA	<i>Approved by</i>	N/A	<i>Contact No</i>	N/A	<i>Date</i>	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

EMJPIC							
<i>Report provided by</i>	EMJPIC	<i>Approved by</i>	N/A	<i>Contact No</i>	N/A	<i>Date</i>	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

DEFENCE							
<i>Report provided by</i>	ADF	<i>Approved by</i>	LCDR Mick Kumpis	<i>Contact No</i>	0457533864	<i>Date</i>	2014-02-13 09:27:51
Summary	Nil to report.						
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

WORKSAFE							
<i>Report provided by</i>	Worksafe	<i>Approved by</i>	N/A	<i>Contact No</i>	N/A	<i>Date</i>	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							