



SEMT Situation Report

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Incident	Fires_9 February 2014	
Compiled by	SEMT Situation Report Officer - Kristin Devine	
	Date: 2014-02-14	Time: 09:10:45
Approved by	State Controller - Craig Lapsley	
	Date: 2014-02-14	Time: 09:17:21
On behalf of	State Emergency Management Team	
Report Number	6	

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. The Mickleham-Kilmore fire has now been contained however, large fires in Gippsland are still yet to be contained.

Executive Summary

The fires in the Latrobe Valley 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. 7 significant fires are not yet under control and cover an area of approximately 180,000 hectares. Personnel from NSW, SA, QLD and New Zealand are continuing to assist Victorian fire services across the State. One Watch and Act warning remains current for the going fires in East Gippsland (Goongerah-Deddick Valley). Residents in the Mickleham Kilmore area are advised that although the immediate threat has passed, residents should remain vigilant. The Chief Health Officer has issued a Health Alert for the high level smoke warning for the Latrobe Valley. A low level bushfire smoke advisory has also been issued by Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for the rest of the state except the Mallee and Wimmera districts. Air monitoring is continuing in the area. There is a level of community concern regarding the potential risks of smoke and carbon monoxide, as a result of the fire at the Hazelwood mine. EMJPIC is coordinating a comms strategy to reassure the community, and provide advice from Health and the EPA on how to mitigate the effects of the smoke. Media officers have been deployed to Traralgon to assist with the delivery of key messages. The number of homes confirmed destroyed since early February is now 45. Assessments are still underway, where access is possible. Around 45 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. Road inspections and repairs will continue as access becomes available. Relief centres at Wallan and Seymour closed last night. Delegate (in NSW) had 5 people overnight. Over 200 Personal Hardship Assistance payments have been confirmed as totaling \$240,750. Electricity distributors are progressively returning service to customers. DEECD report a further reduction in the number of closed schools (4), early childhood facilities (1), and bus routes (8) for today. Significant areas of public land have been impacted by the fires currently burning across the State, particularly in the East Gippsland area. Nine national parks and flora and fauna reserves are temporarily closed and seven partially closed. DEPI is reporting that the most significant agricultural impacts have occurred in the Mickleham-Kilmore area, where it is estimated that 464 agricultural producers have been affected. Approximately 8364 sheep and 277 cattle have been reported dead and 3019 sheep missing. Five sheds, 274km fencing, 818 ha pasture and 354t of fodder has also been destroyed in this area. Significantly lower livestock losses have been reported across the other fire affected areas. However, while access to areas around Orbost is restricted, intelligence via limited visits and phone contact suggests that the 122 known agricultural producers have been affected. A fodder distribution program has commenced with the assistance of the Victorian Farmers Federation.

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.
- Relief agencies have identified a high level of distress from residents, in particular the psycho-social impact and re-traumatising of people still recovering from the 2009 bushfires.

Key Activities

- A community meeting will be held to provide an update on the Latrobe Valley open cut mine fires at 6pm Friday 14 February at Kernot Hall, Princes Highway, Morwell
- A community meeting will be held at Buchan Hall at 9am on Saturday 15 February.
- Delegate Country Club relief centre (NSW) is open and a community meeting will be held there on Saturday 15 February.
- The Chief Health Officer is undertaking radio interviews with ABC Gippsland to clarify the difference between the carbon monoxide at the mine fire and the bushfire smoke.
- The State Crisis and Resilience '2014 Bushfires – State Recovery Coordination Team' will meet today to discuss the Jan and Feb 2014 fires, including the current situation and recovery 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.



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Overview

- 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.
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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	Supt RYAN State Emergency Response Coordinator	Contact No	90323600	Date	2014-02-14 07:33:59
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Summary

The coordination of Initial Impact Assessments for fires in the footprints of the Benalla and Traralgon RCCs continued throughout 13/2/14. This coordination primarily concentrated on processes, timeliness, and quality control aspects of the IAs. The assessments of the Traralgon footprint has concluded and the only fire complex remaining in the Benalla footprint is Kilmore/ Wunghnu which is 70% completed. The assessment work will conclude today. An impact assessment handover meeting was conducted 13/2/2014 between the police coordinator and representative from DHS. Continued to 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. Police Emergency Response Coordinators in Hume and Gippsland regions are embedded in the REMTs and the IMTs, and are performing their coordination roles.

Impacts

- Nil

Emerging Issues

- Nil

Coordination - Relief & Recovery

Report provided by	DH/DHS	Approved by	Carmel Flynn	Contact No	0408 567 801	Date	2014-02-14 08:59:44
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Summary

Relief centres at Wallan and Seymour closed last night at 11 pm. Delegate had 5 people overnight. Over 200 Personal Hardship Assistance payments have been confirmed as totalling \$240,750. Relief partner agencies are providing food and water, material aid and personal support. Red Cross continue to support to emergency services at Hazelwood Staging Ground. The State Crisis and Resilience '2014 Bushfires – State Recovery Coordination Team' will meet today to discuss the Jan and Feb 2014 fires, including the current situation and recovery activities. Nine recovery centres have been established, a number of community meetings have occurred and further meetings are planned.

Impacts

- A number of impacted properties are requiring clean-up of water tanks. Households that rely on water tanks for drinking and sanitation are being referred to local government for assistance.
- Outreach programs and psychosocial support are being provided to affected individuals as required, in conjunction with local governments.

Emerging Issues

- Relief agencies have identified a high level of distress from residents, the psychosocial impact and re-traumatising of the recent bushfires from those recovering from the 2009 bushfires.

Weather

Report provided by	Bureau Of Meteorology	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
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Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Police

Report provided by	VicPol	Approved by	Matthew RYAN	Contact No	0404822800	Date	2014-02-14 07:35:26
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Summary

Police have continued to perform planning, operational, ICC liaison, traffic management points, investigative functions and co ordination of initial impact assessments fire affected areas. Recent favourable weather has seen a significant reduction in manned TMP's. A coordinated agency focus is being implemented to address any identified issues arising out of the community meetings

Impacts

- 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

- Community Safety, including the safety of police and emergency service personnel, around the Hazelwood open coal mine fire.

Water/Sewage

Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
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Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues



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Electricity/Gas

Report provided by DSDBI Approved by Marwa Khalaf Contact No 0419162240 Date 2014-02-13 22:34:54

Summary Hazelwood has 6 units currently in service. Expect all 8 to be in service by Friday. Yallourn is operating as normal. Healthy reserves predicted for the week. Distribution businesses are progressively returning service to customers.

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Pre Hospital

Report provided by Ambulance Victoria Approved by Paul Holman Contact No 0417 346 642 Date 2014-02-13 20:25:09

Summary AV operations mainly centred on Gippsland. Health Commander and Level A PPE Team at Morwell Open Cut and Health Support at Yallourn Open Cut for an extended period. 4WD Ambulance crew dedicated to the Mt Jersey complex in East Gippsland. AEOC & SCC staffed for extended periods and AV LO in the Seymour ICC for day shift.

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Health

Report provided by DH/DHS Approved by Alison McMillan Contact No 0408072150 Date 2014-02-14 08:33:06

Summary A Health and Human Services Liaison Officer is working in the Hazelwood Incident Control Centre for the Hazelwood Mine Fire. Regional Health Coordinator is participating in planning and preparation for community meetings regarding the mine fires. The Chief Health Officer has issued a Health Alert for the high level smoke warning for the Latrobe Valley. A low level bushfire smoke advisory has also been issued by Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for the rest of the state except the Mallee and Wimmera districts. Air monitoring is continuing in the area. The Chief Health Officer has also undertaken radio interviews with ABC Gippsland about the difference between the carbon monoxide at the mine fire and the bushfire smoke.

Impacts

- Health impacts of smoke are affecting a number of areas across the state.

Emerging Issues

- Nil to report

Freight, Marine & Transport Sector Coordination

Report provided by DTPLI Approved by Donovan Croucamp Contact No 0438578477 Date 2014-02-14 05:38:03

Summary Update on Repair works: Bendigo line - works complete. Gippsland line - works on the Hearnes Oak loop will be completed today and works to the Morwell section have started with sleeper removals. Extensive tree cutting is required and permits for vegetation removal have been issued. These works should be complete early next week. Tocumwal line - works have commenced. Mildura freight line derailment (not fire related) - recovery of grain product and carriages has commenced. Repair works will begin once the removal of the train is complete.

Impacts

- No new fire impacts to report

Emerging Issues

- Temporary closure of the Mildura freight line may cause a short term delay to the recovery process of Mildura exporters affected by the recent fire related track closure.

Public Transport

Report provided by PTV Approved by Kathryn Ng Contact No 0417302474 Date 2014-02-14 07:19:54

Summary Business as usual. Bendigo line repairs complete. Traralgon line services being managed around final repairs.

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Roads

Report provided by VicRoads Approved by Keith Weegberg Contact No 0438 767050 Date 2014-02-13 21:48:40

Summary Over 80 roads have now been affected by the heat and fires in recent weeks. Around 45 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. Preliminary cost estimates continue to be prepared as access and inspections are being conducted. The estimate of damage to road assets to date is around \$3.0m. There are still a number of roads to be inspected in Gippsland which are not included in the estimate.

Impacts

- Around 45 roads remain affected with access restrictions or reduced speed limits

Emerging Issues

- Some significant damage is being identified as access becomes available. The estimate to date is around \$3.0m.



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Education

Report provided by	DEECD	Approved by	J.McKEAGNEY	Contact No	0402 309 634	Date	2014-02-13 17:46:21
Summary	Closures for Friday 14 February comprise 3 schools, 1 early childhood facility and 8 school bus routes.						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South East - Goongerah P-8 (2 campuses) , Goongerah early childhood, 3 bus routes (2 altered) North East- Willomavin PS, Assumption College, Killmore (Catholic), 4 bus routes North West- 1 bus route 						
Emerging Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South East Victoria Region progressing relocation options for relocation options for Goongerah P-8 students while the school remains closed. Frustration regarding lack of clear advice on air quality issues directed at DEECD regional staff by some Morwell facilities. Need for prompt and meaningful advice is critical to community confidence 						

Environment

Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Andrew Shannon, Parks Victoria	Contact No	0427 477 297	Date	2014-02-13 14:52:03
Summary	Fire is impacting significant areas of public land but environmental impacts are not yet known. 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. Bushfire Rapid Assessment Teams have commenced in the Mallee Parks.						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate high impacts on vulnerable species and vegetation communities. 						
Emerging Issues							

Public Land

Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Andrew Shannon, Parks Victoria	Contact No	0427 477 297	Date	2014-02-13 14:47:33
Summary	Significant areas of public land have been impacted by fires across the state, particularly in the Mallee and East Gippsland areas. Multiple national parks and flora and fauna reserves have been affected by recent fire activity. Nine are temporarily closed and seven partially closed. Fire affected areas will remain closed until emergency rehabilitation of roads and tracks and dangerous tree works are completed. Bushfire Rapid Assessment Teams have commenced in the six parks temporarily closed in the Mallee: Wyperfield National Park, Lake Albatutya 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.						
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loss of infrastructure Loss of tourism Loss of amenity 						
Emerging Issues							

Agriculture/Food

Report provided by	DEPI/Parks	Approved by	Russell McMurray	Contact No	0417397297	Date	2014-02-13 19:03:42
Summary	State Agricultural Recovery Centre (SARC) at Attwood continues to coordinate agricultural assessments through local centres at Tatura, Traralgon, Bairnsdale and Orbost. Eleven field teams have been deployed across the affected areas predominately from Attwood (Mickleham-Kilmore complex). Largest numbers of livestock impact appear to be in the Mickleham-Kilmore area with minimal livestock losses reported across the other fire incidences and complexes. A fodder distribution program has commenced with the assistance of the Victorian Farmers Federation.						
Impacts							

Tourism

Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	Stuart Toplis	Contact No	0412 541 460	Date	2014-02-13 17:21:27
Summary	Nil to report. Impacts and emerging issues remain unchanged/current from last Situation Report (12 Feb).						
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							

Business/Industry

Report provided by	DSDBI	Approved by	N/A	Contact No	N/A	Date	Nil
Summary							
Impacts							
Emerging Issues							



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Local Government

Report provided by DSDBI Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil
 Summary
 Impacts
 Emerging Issues

Emergency Call Taking

Report provided by ESTA Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil
 Summary
 Impacts
 Emerging Issues

EMJPIC

Report provided by EMJPIC Approved by Merita Tabain Contact No 0408362981 Date 2014-02-13 17:36:34
 Summary The rising number of fire fighters who have been treated for carbon monoxide poisoning at the open cut mine has prompted increasing community concerns. This is being exacerbated by fire union claims about unsafe work conditions. EMJPIC is coordinating a comms strategy to reassure the community, and provide advice from Health and the EPA on how to mitigate the effects of the smoke. Media officers have been deployed to Traralgon to assist with the comms delivery. EMJPIC will continue to monitor closely. Elsewhere, media interest is waning, but still strong. Focus remains on the human and economic impacts. (Lost houses and livestock) WOVG advertising is generating significant traffic to Govt websites. EMJPIC is continuing to work through options for social media monitoring.
 Impacts
 Emerging Issues

- Community concerns about 'toxic' smoke impacting on residents near open cut mine. EMJPIC is coordinating the media strategy.

Defence

Report provided by ADF Approved by LCDR Mick Kumpis Contact No 0457533864 Date 2014-02-14 07:28:29
 Summary Nil to report.
 Impacts
 Emerging Issues

Worksafe

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