



SEMT Situation Report

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Incident	Fires_9 February 2014	
Compiled by	SEMT Situation Report Officer - Kristin Devine	
	Date: 2014-02-15	Time: 09:05:12
Approved by	State Controller - Tony Murphy	
	Date: 2014-02-15	Time: 11:05:36
On behalf of	State Emergency Management Team	
Report Number	7	

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 towards making areas safe for the return of residents.

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 to assess and clear dangerous trees, particularly along roads, so residents can safely return to their properties is continuing. 5 significant fires are still going. Personnel from NSW, QLD and New Zealand are continuing to assist Victorian fire services across the State. One Watch and Act warning remains in place for the Goongerah fire in East Gippsland. The Chief Health Officer's Health Alert - High level smoke warning for the Latrobe Valley remains active. As does the low level bushfire smoke advisory issued by Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for Melbourne, Geelong and Gippsland (including the Latrobe Valley). Air monitoring is continuing in the area. There is ongoing community concern regarding the potential risks of smoke and carbon monoxide, as a result of the fire at the La Trobe Valley mine, particularly from the Morwell school community. The Department of Health conducted a community engagement meeting on Friday 14 February. A Health Management and Decontamination Plan is now in place for the Latrobe Valley coal mine fire. The number of homes confirmed destroyed since early February remains at 45. Assessments are still underway, where access is possible. DSDBI advised in this morning's SEMT Meeting that Cootes Transport has taken a large proportion of its fleet of fuel tankers off the road due to safety concerns with the tankers. This may impact fuel supply for fire agencies. This risk is currently being investigated. Around 40 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. The estimate of damage to road assets to date is around \$3m. There are still a number of roads to be inspected in Gippsland which are not included in this estimate. VicPol advises that there has been a significant reduction in the number of manned Traffic Management Points (TMPs), only two are still in place across the state. Delegate relief centre (in NSW) is still open however, no one stayed overnight on Friday. Seven recovery centres have been established, a number of community recovery meetings have occurred and further meetings are planned. Outreach programs and psychosocial support are being provided to affected individuals as required, in conjunction with local governments. DEECD advise that only two schools are expected to be closed on Monday 17 February - both campuses of Goongerah P-8. To avoid the perception that all of Gippsland is fire affected there may need to be targeted messaging leading up to Easter to avoid mass cancellations in unaffected parts of region. DEPI reports that the most significant agricultural impacts have occurred in the Mickleham-Kilmore area, where it is estimated that 464 agricultural producers have been affected. Damage estimates across the state have so far reached over \$35m however, this figure is likely to rise as assessments are still underway. Substantial boundary fence damage to a large number of properties is making stock difficult to contain. Councils may not have the resources to muster, contain and feed wandering stock, Mitchell Shire Council has advised that this is the case in their area. Local Governments are indicating that overall they are coping with resourcing, albeit stretched in some cases, with the exception of Mitchell Shire Council as outlined above.

High Level Impacts

- The Chief Health Officer's Health Alert - High level smoke warning for the Latrobe Valley and the EPAs low level bushfire smoke advisory for Melbourne, Geelong and Gippsland remain active.
- 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.
- A level of distress from residents, in particular the psycho-social impact and re-traumatising of people still recovering from the 2009 bushfires has been identified by relief agencies.

Key Activities

- A community meeting will be held at Buchan Hall at 9am today.
- A community meeting will be held at School Road, Club Terrace at 12pm today.

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 so residents can safely get back to their houses.
- 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.
- When smoke is in the air, but a fire is not directly threatening you, stay indoors and close all windows and doors. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24. Further information on bushfire smoke and your health can be found at: www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires-smoke.htm
- While some rain is forecast in the coming days it is not expected to have a significant impact on the current fires – this fire season will continue until the fire grounds receive considerable rain.
- 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



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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.

- DEPI are continuing to visit affected properties to discuss livestock welfare needs with landowners and undertake loss and damage assessments.



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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 Matthew RYAN Contact No 0404822800 Date 2014-02-15 06:46:36

Summary Initial Impact Assessments (IIA) have been completed and the reports delivered to the State Controller. These figures reflect the current situation up until 0900hrs on 14 February 2014. No further IIA numbers will be published until a supplementary report is published at 0900hrs on Thursday the 20th of February. Police continue to contribute to the State Strategic Support Team, focusing on emerging issues coming from the Latrobe Valley, with particular focus on the congruence of state and local messaging (particularly health messaging), air quality and safety of emergency service personnel. Police Emergency Response Coordinators in Hume and Gippsland regions are embedded in the REMT's and the IMT's are performing their coordination roles.

Impacts • Nil

Emerging Issues • Nil

Coordination - Relief & Recovery

Report provided by DH/DHS Approved by Alan Hall Contact No 0411255884 Date 2014-02-15 08:55:58

Summary One relief centre is open at Delegate, with nil staying overnight. Relief partner agencies are providing food and water, material aid and personal support. Red Cross are continuing to provide first aid, and food and water to emergency service at Hazelwood Staging Ground. The State Crisis and Resilience '2014 Bushfires - State Recovery Coordination Team' met yesterday and will continue to meet weekly to coordinate the recovery for the fires. Regional and municipal committees are meeting as required. Seven recovery centres are established, a number of community recovery 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 • 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 Supt. Matthew RYAN Contact No 0404822800 Date 2014-02-15 07:18:03

Summary Police continued to support the control agencies and perform planning, operational deployment, ICC liaison, traffic management points and investigative functions. The first phase of IIA in fire affected areas has now been completed. Recent favourable weather has seen a significant reduction in manned TMP's. Police continue to focus and participate with other agencies in community meetings to address emerging issues or fears for safety.

Impacts • Police service delivery in Gippsland Divisions continue to be impacted 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

Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues



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Electricity/Gas

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

Pre Hospital

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

Health

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

Freight, Marine & Transport Sector Coordination

Report provided by DTPLI Approved by Donovan Croucamp Contact No 0438578477 Date 2014-02-15 08:01:26

Summary Update on rail repairs: Emu derailment on Mildura line - 250 metres of track damaged. A gravel level crossing and signage has been destroyed. Yesterday the operation to remove the grain from the overturned wagons was continuing. V-Line has mobilised machines and materials to the site and has crews ready to start on repairs. Completion expected next Tuesday afternoon (18 February). Gippsland Line - Trains continue to operate to near normal schedules but with some services from Melbourne terminating at Warragul due to single line running. Repairs to the Morwell loop are expected to be finished by Sunday with full service likely to resume Monday. Repairs to the Hernes Oak loop should be completed today.

Impacts • No new impacts to report

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 2014-02-15 06:33:45

Summary Over 80 roads have been affected by the heat and fires in recent weeks. Around 40 roads remain affected with restricted access or lower speed limits. 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 40 roads remain affected with restricted access or lower speed limits.

Emerging Issues • The current estimated cost for road repairs is around \$3.0m with further inspection still to be undertaken.

Education

Report provided by DEECD Approved by Geoff Peterson Contact No 0428 384 427 Date 2014-02-14 16:23:15

Summary Weekend schools and Early childhood facilities closed as per BAU. Monday 17 February closures comprise 2 schools

Impacts • South East-Goongerah P-8 (2 campuses)

Emerging Issues • South East Victoria Region may relocate Goongerah students northwards to Bendoc. This update will be confirmed over the weekend in subsequent sitrep updates.
 • Smoke issues continue to be of concern to Morwell school community. Community engagement meeting led by Health at 18:00 today will be attended by DEECD. Outreach should help with community concerns.
 • EPA portable monitoring at one school site indicates good air quality at this stage



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Environment

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

Public Land

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

Agriculture/Food

Report provided by DEPI/Parks Approved by Russell McMurray Contact No 0417 397 Date 2014-02-14
 297 19:31:48

Summary Mickleham-Kilmore fire remains a priority for agricultural recovery. Animal health response is complete, however, impact assessments and urgent referrals for fodder and agistment to VFF and removal of dead stock to local councils continues. All assessments are complete in Gippsland and Wunghnu. Animal incident management teams have handed over to rural recovery coordinators to oversee urgent referrals and long-term recovery management. Field teams have responded to animal health issues in all fire affected areas except Goongerah and parts of Orbost as it is still unsafe to do so. Planning activities to meet future potential animal health response priorities and ongoing recovery arrangements are being reviewed.

Impacts

- In Wunghnu, 172 properties assessed. 133 livestock dead; and 294 k fencing, 1152 t hay, 1378 ha pasture and 11 ha horticulture destroyed. Damage currently estimated at over \$8 million
- In Gippsland most significant livestock loss was in Mt Ray with 205 livestock dead. 41k of fencing, 44 t hay, 1332 h pasture were destroyed. Damage currently estimated at over \$4 million
- Jacks River-Egans Rd: 69k fencing, 114t hay, 322 h pasture destroyed. Hernes McDonald track: 8 livestock dead; 36 k fencing and 52h pasture destroyed. Damage currently estimated at over \$4.5 million
- In Mickleham-Kilmore, 83% of properties assessments complete. 8606 livestock dead; and 1286 k fencing, 711 t hay, 3621 ha and 329 h horticulture destroyed. Damage current estimate at over \$16 million
- Dalrymple road estimates to date 41 livestock dead; and 158 k fencing, 137 ha pasture and 8 ha pasture destroyed. Damage current estimate at over \$2.8 million.

Emerging Issues

- Substantial boundary fence damage to a large number of properties increases the risk of wandering stock or stock being mustered by non-lawful owners.
- Mitchell Shire has advised they will not have the resources to muster, contain and feed unaccountable wandering stock.
- Large fire containment lines need rehabilitation, and depending on rainfall events, there may be some risk from erosion.

Tourism

Report provided by DSDBI Approved by Stuart Topliss Contact No 0412 541 Date 2014-02-14
 460 22:37:13

Summary Nil to report. Impacts and emerging issues remain unchanged/current from 12 Feb Situation Report .

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Business/Industry

Report provided by DSDBI Approved by Daniel Rodger Contact No 0428 039 Date 2014-02-14
 561 16:12:40

Summary Some cancellation of events in Gippsland due to disruption and uncertainty caused by the fires and smoke. Combination of heat, fire and smoke impacted on business productivity in Greater Shepparton and Benalla areas.

Impacts

- Bega factory Strathmerton - 60 min power failure Monday as Powercor replaced power poles. No warning, requiring complete factory shutdown (4 hrs) to clean and restart rather than controlled shutdown
- Concern in a number of areas that fires have affected the same farming properties that experienced flooding in 2011/12

Emerging Issues

- 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. No noticeable impact yet.



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Local Government

Report provided by DSDBI Approved by Daniel Rodger Contact No 0428 039 561 Date 2014-02-14 16:07:45

Summary No significant updates. Local Governments indicating that they are coping with resourcing, albeit stretched in some cases.

Impacts

Emerging Issues

- Some Local Governments have flagged concern regarding future planning issues associated with rebuilding. This is being followed up to better understand possible issues and implications.

Emergency Call Taking

Report provided by ESTA Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil

Summary Nil to report (entered by SitRep Officer based on advice provided via text message)

Impacts

Emerging Issues

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EMJPIC

Report provided by EMJPIC Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil

Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Defence

Report provided by ADF Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil

Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues

Worksafe

Report provided by Worksafe Approved by N/A Contact No N/A Date Nil

Summary

Impacts

Emerging Issues