

ForestrySA

Fire Danger Season Review

The 2019-20 Fire Danger Season had one of the busiest starts on record, with the Country Fire Service and other agencies agreeing it was the worst for several years.

ForestrySA crews responded to several significant fires in both the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle forest regions between 20 December 2019 and 9 January 2020.

Despite this, ForestrySA maintained operational fire preparedness for the duration of the season, including incident command structures, fire tankers, bulk water capacity and Quick Response Vehicles.

A State Fire Duty Officer and Duty Officer structure with weekly fire briefings was also maintained throughout the season, with weekly training well attended by staff to ensure skill level remained high.

I would like to thank everyone for their commitment, participation and valuable contributions over the past season and I look forward to working with everyone again.

Highlights

- A high level of commitment from ForestrySA fire staff, who worked through the Christmas holiday period to ensure fire protection was maintained during a very busy start to the 2019-20 Fire Danger Season.
- A high level of professionalism displayed by fire crews during major fire events at Cudlee Creek and Heath Native Forest Reserve, highlighting ForestrySA's commitment to training and development.
- Addition of three new Fire Duty Officers to the ForestrySA fire roster.
- Improvements to ForestrySA's Bulk Water Carrier fleet, resulting in reduced maintenance costs and less down-time.
- Ongoing improvements to the new BART (Broadcast, Alert, Response, Turnout) system.
- Significant improvements to pre-season training and staff development.
- High staff attendance at weekly fire briefings and trainings, providing a sound basis for weekly fire reactions in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle regions.
- Continued ForestrySA fire management participation in state and local fire committees.

Julian Speed

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FORESTRYSA
AUGUST 2020

Reaction summary

Mount Lofty Ranges

ForestrySA fire crews attended 19 fires in the Mount Lofty Ranges during the 2019-20 fire season. Of these, 11 were on land owned or managed by ForestrySA.

FIRE RESPONSE LEVELS: 1 December 2019 to 30 April 2020

Rating	NOV 2019	DEC 2019	JAN 2020	FEB 2020	MAR 2020	APR 2020	TOTAL
Low - Moderate	1	3	0	8	2	11	25
High 1	5	3	6	11	5	5	35
High 2	2	10	9	7	6	3	37
Very High 1	3	2	8	2	3	0	18
Very High 2	1	5	5	1	2	0	14
Severe	0	6	2	0	1	1	13
Extreme	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Catastrophic	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
TOTAL DAYS	16	31	31	29	19	20	146



Green Triangle

ForestrySA fire crews responded to seven fires in the Green Triangle during the 2019-20 fire season. Two of these fires were on land owned and managed by ForestrySA.

A total of 380 standby hours were recorded in ForestrySA's seven fire towers throughout the season, assisting in rapid fire detection across the Green Triangle region.

FIRE RESPONSE LEVELS: 1 December 2019 to 30 April 2020

Rating	NOV 2019	DEC 2019	JAN 2020	FEB 2020	MAR 2020	APR 2020	TOTAL
Low - Moderate	-	0	8	19	16	12	55
High 1	-	4	8	5	6	2	25
High 2	-	5	4	2	4	0	15
Very High 1	-	3	6	2	4	0	15
Very High 2	-	2	2	0	1	0	5
Severe	-	2	3	0	0	0	5
Extreme	-	1	0	0	0	0	1
Catastrophic	-	1	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL DAYS	-	18	31	28	31	14	122



Significant fire events, 2019-20

Hollands Creek, Cudlee Creek | 20 December 2019

Under catastrophic fire weather conditions, a tree branch falling on powerlines caused a fire at Hollands Creek, adjacent ForestrySA land. Initially, ForestrySA responded with two Fire Kings, a bulk water carrier and a command vehicle, including 10 firefighters.

A total of 27 ForestrySA personnel attended throughout the campaign, working in conjunction with crews from the Country Fire Service (CFS) and Department for Environment and Water (DEW). ForestrySA personnel worked on the fire ground for 12 days, while simultaneously maintaining fire coverage across the Kuitpo and Mount Crawford forest districts.

More than 102ha of ForestrySA pine plantation and 350ha of native bushland was affected by the fire.

Heath Native Forest Reserve, Green Triangle | 21 December 2019

A lightning strike on private land spread to OneFortyOne Plantations forest and ForestrySA native forest reserve. ForestrySA crews attended the initial response and continued to work on the fireground for the following two weeks. Approximately 204ha of ForestrySA native bushland was affected.

Watts Gully, Mount Crawford | 3 January 2020

ForestrySA crews responded to a fire burning in grass on private land adjacent the Watts Gully Native Forest Reserve. Wind direction and predicted speed meant the fire had the potential to significantly impact ForestrySA land. Fortunately, thanks to the diligence of ForestrySA and CFS crews, the impact on ForestrySA land was negligible, with just 12 small spot fires igniting over a collective 400m² area.

Colemans Plantation, Mount Crawford | 9 January 2020

ForestrySA crews responded to a fire burning within the Colemans pine plantation. Due quick response from ForestrySA, CFS and assistance from DEW, the fire was brought under control before it could spread to neighbouring pine plantation and SA Water land. A total of 3ha of pine plantation was affected in the fire.