



## 2016 Tasmania Deployment (update 2)

News and information for families

03 February 2016

### Welcome

The following update has been provided by Tim Mitchell. Tim is the New Zealand Liaison for the National Rural Fire Authority during this deployment to Tasmania.

### Kiwis get stuck in

Our Kiwi crews have been getting stuck into the work at hand, and we've had positive feedback from the Australians, who have been very happy with the kiwi work ethic and production rates.

An example occurred when a kiwi crew was tasked to go examine a fire which they had little information about, thinking they would come back with size and containment options.

When they arrived they found it would be easier to put it out then and there, which they did, with the approval of the operations manager.

### Lake Gordon and Wuthering Heights fires

Currently there are approximately 180 remote area specialists operating throughout Tasmania.

These are a combination of personnel from New Zealand, New South Wales (NSW), Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Parks and Wildlife, Forestry Tasmania, and Tasmania Fire Service (TFS).

The State Fire Operations Centre (SFOC) remains activated to provide coordination to the fire response effort. Likewise, Regional Fire Operations Centres (RFOC) are stood up across Tasmania, and numerous multi-agency Incident Management Teams (IMT) remain in place.

The New Zealand crews continue to work from the Strathgordon Complex and Arthur River Complex with the kiwis mainly working on the Lake Gordon and Wuthering Heights Fires.

Lake Gordon Fire is approximately 4000 hectares - the majority of work is to further secure containment lines through cold trailing and extinguishing hot spots.

Wuthering Heights Fire is approximately 19,652 hectares - this is still an active fire so the work is a combination of establishing, containment and further securing the fire perimeter through cold trailing and extinguishing hot spots.

Weather conditions over the next few days are expected to change to a period of more settled warmer weather; no rain is forecast for the next 10 days and coastal winds are expected to strengthen from the Southwest.

The possibility is that some fires which have shown little activity over the last few days, may show increased fire behaviour.



***Photo: NZ Defence and Timberlands crew (plus Taskforce leader) after working on the Wuthering Heights fire.***



***Photo: NZ crew working on perimeter hotspots on the Lake Gordon Fire.***



***Photo Southern crew taking a break to capture the view.***



***Photo: Southern crew waiting for their ride home.***

## Life on deployment

A lot of the areas where the kiwis are working are extremely remote, meaning our crews are getting the opportunity to see many landscapes even the local Tasmanians haven't.

Because of the remoteness, most crews are being flown into the fire grounds, up to a 40 minute flight in some cases.

Accommodation for crews has not been easy to source due to the large number of fire personnel from out of state, local residents from affected areas needing accommodation, and the low number of beds generally available in many areas. Most have found the accommodation and meals provided to be very good, some commenting they are not sure they will want to leave.

Planning for rest and relaxation days (7/8 Feb) is well underway with the task force in the north going to Devonport, and those in the south going to Hobart. Due to travel times between the north and south it was not possible to get the two taskforces together in the same location for this break.



***Photo: Some of the NZ crew enjoying some lunch.***

## Fire Situation

Of the 71 fires in Tasmania: 46 are still active, 11 are contained, and 14 are contained with a watch and monitor in place before closing off.

To date the fires have impacted on an area of over 104,000 hectares with the combined fire perimeter of all fires approximately 829.5 km.

**Fire Situation 03/02/2016 1150**



## Kiwi-ala?

Most of the wildlife in Tasmania seems to be hazardous and venomous (snakes and spiders), blood suckers (leeches, mosquitos, horse flies), or just solid (so you don't want to hit them in a vehicle).

However, one crew member managed to find what appears to be a new species of Koala bear!



*Photo: Australia Koala not native to Tasmania.*



*Photo: Possibly a new species, Tasmania Koala.*

## New Zealand Crews

A few personnel changes have taken place with the arrival of Nigel Dravitzki, Dean Hewitt, and Neil Gardyne.

Nigel will be taking over the New Zealand Liaison role from Tim Mitchell to enable Tim to return to New Zealand to carry out work commitments.

Neil Gardyne has taken over from Rewa Mahia, who had to return to New Zealand following the passing of his father. Our thoughts are with Rewa and his family.

### Hobart – State Fire Centre

|                             |                   |              |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Nigel Dravitzki             | NZ Liaison        | Taranaki RFA |
| Tim Mitchell                | NZ Liaison        | NRFA         |
| <b>Arthur River Complex</b> |                   |              |
| Dave Newton                 | Task Force Leader | Waimea RFA   |
| Mike Donovan                | Crew Leader       | Auckland RFA |
| Billy Torpey                | Fire Fighter      | Auckland RFA |

|                             |                   |                            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Saxon Ross                  | Fire Fighter      | Auckland RFA               |
| Kierin Oppatt               | Fire Fighter      | Auckland RFA               |
| Simon Stoddart              | Fire Fighter      | Auckland NZFS              |
| Brent Ruruku                | Crew Leader       | NZDF                       |
| Joshua Nahi                 | Fire Fighter      | NZDF                       |
| Thomas Grant                | Fire Fighter      | NZDF                       |
| Jonothan McGovern           | Fire Fighter      | NZDF                       |
| Lance Harris                | Fire Fighter      | NZDF                       |
| Rodger Nelson               | Crew Leader       | Pumicelands RFA            |
| James Werahiko              | Fire Fighter      | Pumicelands RFA            |
| Stuart Lyall                | Fire Fighter      | Pumicelands RFA            |
| Alan Keeber                 | Fire Fighter      | Pumicelands RFA            |
| Mark Cleghorn               | Fire Fighter      | Pumicelands RFA            |
| Jeremy Cox                  | Crew Leader       | Timberlands                |
| Stephen Gatenby             | Fire Fighter      | Timberlands                |
| Kahmen Jones                | Fire Fighter      | Timberlands                |
| Hayden Pearson              | Fire Fighter      | Timberlands                |
| Darren Melville             | Fire Fighter      | Timberlands                |
| <b>Strathgordon Complex</b> |                   |                            |
| John Rasmussen              | Task Force Leader | Department of Conservation |
| Ashton Oliver               | Crew Leader       | NELMAC                     |
| Sam Speight                 | Fire Fighter      | NELMAC                     |
| Brendan Jones               | Fire Fighter      | Waimea RFA                 |
| Nathan Palmer               | Fire Fighter      | Waimea RFA                 |
| Lee Beloe                   | Fire Fighter      | Waimea RFA                 |
| Stephen Robson              | Crew Leader       | Department of Conservation |
| Nathan Jones                | Fire Fighter      | Department of Conservation |
| Patrik Eschenmoser          | Fire Fighter      | Department of Conservation |
| Steve Packer                | Fire Fighter      | West Coast RFA             |
| Ken Keenan                  | Crew Leader       | Southern RFA               |
| David Coveney               | Fire Fighter      | Southern RFA               |
| Neil Gardyne                | Fire Fighter      | Southern RFA               |
| Vuniyani Qoro               | Fire Fighter      | Southern RFA               |
| Naipolioni Qasevkatini      | Fire Fighter      | Southern RFA               |
| Garrett Ugray               | Crew Leader       | Forest Protection Services |
| Joseph Cowen                | Fire Fighter      | Forest Protection Services |
| Taylor Snelgar              | Fire Fighter      | Forest Protection Services |
| Nathan Sullivan             | Fire Fighter      | Forest Protection Services |
| Martin White                | Fire Fighter      | Forest Protection Services |
| Dean Hewitt                 | Fire Fighter      | Waimea RFA                 |