



2016 VICTORIA BUSHFIRE DEPLOYMENT NEWSLETTER NO. 3

Monday, 11 January 2016

New Zealand Taskforce Alpha Update

More work with hand tools

Thursday the team are making really good progress securing containment lines and also putting in their rake-hoe lines.

NZ Field Liaison, Graeme Still, managed to get out into the field on Wednesday, and reports Taskforce Alpha are doing really well, with nothing but positives comments coming from our Australian friends on their work efforts and 'can do' attitude.

Working alongside the Hume Taskforce has been a great success, as the mixture allows the crews to share knowledge and best practice.



Photo: Whangarei crew ready to go bush for the day.



Photo: Great Barrier / Auckland crew making sure that they have everything they need while working away from the ute.



Photo: Otago crew members in the bush.



Photo: Looks can be deceiving - this could almost be NZ bush / terrain!



Photo: Hume Taskforce teach the Kiwi crew how to take a break.

Camp life and lessons learnt

Camp life is going well, with no complaints (just a few minor issues which are quickly sorted).

On the lighter side, one of our guys slept for two days in a sleeping bag liner (as he thought that is all they slept in over here). Needless to say he was 'a bit cool' for a few days when he found out they actually DO have sleeping bags.

The odd thing was, everyone was asked how they were sleeping after the first couple of days, and he always said fine. Poor guy did not want to make a fuss! So there you go the Kiwis are a humble quiet bunch. **LESSON LEARNED:** If something does not seem quite right say something because there is probably an easy solution readily available.

Crew Introduction - Otago

- The Otago crew are a diverse bunch with many backgrounds ranging from:
- farmers;
- forestry workers;
- heavy machine operators;
- full time firefighter;
- a crazy Canadian that hangs out of choppers fighting fires; and
- a DOC worker (to give a bit of balance).

This crew is used to working in arduous conditions with the Otago landscape - much the same as what they are working in now in the Cumberland complex. The only difference is the critters, and the canopy height of the tall ash trees.



**Keri Tuna
(Crew Leader)**



**Ben Douglas
(Crew)**



**Chris McLeod
(Crew)**



**Jason Dodds
(Crew)**



**Dylan McGuinty
(Crew)**

In addition to the crews, we have the team supporting and supervising.

Sully the Taskforce Alpha Leader who supervises the crews normally works for Forest Protection Services, as the operations manager, and has extensive experience fire fighting and carrying out controlled burns in NZ, as well as a number of overseas deployments.

Rory Renwick, previously worked for the Department of Conservation, and now the Auckland Rural Fire Authority, has done a number of deployments as a crew leader but this is the first time as Liaison Officer.

Rory is working in the Coordination Centre in Melbourne, assisting with the coordination of crews and making sure our hosts have all of the information they need, as well as feeding information back to NZ.

Graeme Still, is the Field Liaison, who assists with getting info back to Rory, as well as ensuring the crews are safe and being looked after while they are at the incident.



**Michael (Sully) Sullivan
(Taskforce Alpha Leader)**



**Rory Renwick
(NZ Liaison)**



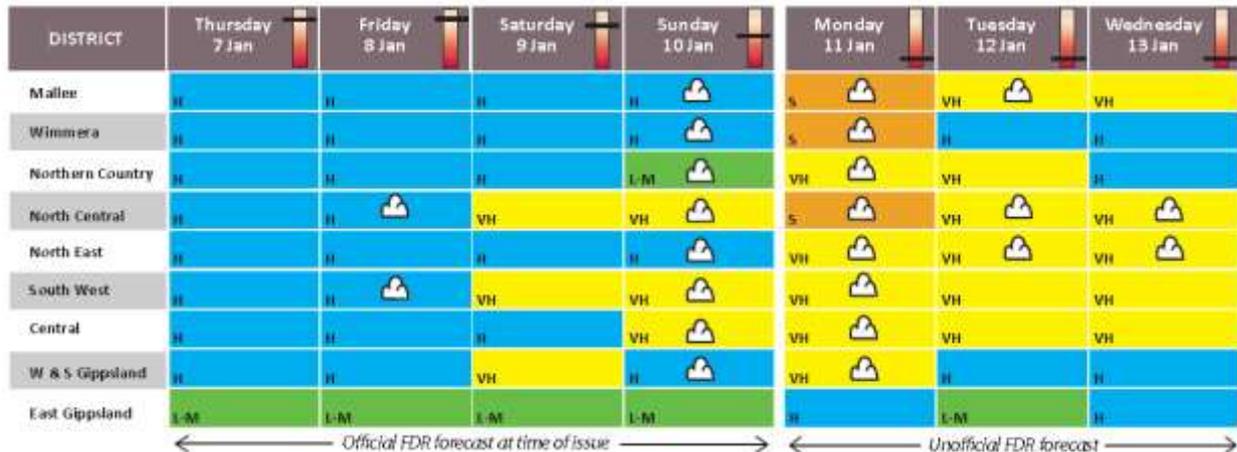
**Graeme Still
(NZ Field Liaison)**

State Wide Situation

The main fire of significance remains the Wye River – Jamieson Track fire with little else happening state wide.

Outlook

Indications are there will be a slight increase in fire danger through Sunday-Monday, next week is likely to be relatively warm.



Fire Danger Rating

- CODE RED (CR)
- EXTREME (E)
- SEVERE (S)
- VERY HIGH (VH)
- HIGH (H)
- LOW-MODERATE (L-M)

Out Planning

Date	Action
9/01/2016	NZ Taskforce Alpha have planned R&R
11/01/2016	NZ Taskforce Bravo arrives in Melbourne
11/01/2016	NZ Taskforce Alpha returns to work
12/01/2016	NZ Taskforce Bravo receives briefing
13/01/2016	NZ Taskforce Commence Work on fireground

Regards

Graeme Still, NZ Field Liaison & Rory Renwick, National Rural Fire Authority Liaison