



**FIRE
EMERGENCY**

NEW ZEALAND

VICTORIA DEPLOYMENT UPDATE #1



Fire and Emergency has sent 42 firefighters and 1 liaison officer for a 24-day deployment to help battle wildfires in Victoria.

The contingent includes 2 taskforces compiled of 1 taskforce leader and 4 crews of 5 arduous firefighters. Jason Hill has been deployed as liaison officer and will be replaced by Glenn Thompson on 24 March.

The team departed New Zealand on 15 March for Melbourne and from there was deployed to the Gippsland region in south-eastern Victoria.

There remains a high risk of lightning, with any new starts expected to be either terrain or wind driven and grow to between 10-100ha due to these factors.

The Kiwi contingent were briefed at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP) facility in Altona on 16 March. This was preceded by a formal welcome, karakia and waiata, performed by Stephanie and Anthony Rotorangi, to recognise the tragic events that have recently taken place in Christchurch.

Victoria Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman also welcomed the contingent, paying special attention to the wellbeing of the New Zealand firefighters in the wake of the Christchurch tragedy. Support processes have been put in place for the New Zealand crews if required between the deployment.



From left; Peter Jackson, Glenn Thompson, Jason Hill (liaison), Natasha Hill, Charlotte McGoldrick, Nick Watson, Marcus Leggett and Ronald Pihama-Adams

VICTORIA WILDFIRE STATS

[AS OF 18 MARCH 2019]

86 WILDFIRES
BURNING

200,000

HECTARES HAVE BEEN BURNT
[APPROXIMATELY]

800 PERSONNEL HAVE
BEEN DEPLOYED

91 FROM INTERSTATE
AND NEW ZEALAND

DROUGHT FACTOR OF **10**
EXISTS ACROSS THE STATE

Taskforce One

Taskforce One, led by Steve Bolton, has been deployed to Traralgon to work on the Latrobe 126, Yinnar South, Budgeree Fire. They are working across two separate sectors and will continue to patrol, black out and dead edge. The taskforce is made up of crews from FENZ Regions 3 and 4 and 2 crews from Timberlands. They are all in good spirits and are working with local crews to share knowledge and skills.

This contained fire is 1,939 ha, has a 53km perimeter, and has affected 51 properties.



Region 4 Crew: Marko Mikulicic, Tim Eden, Todd Fearon and Robert Sheely with a couple of Australians (in green)

Taskforce Two

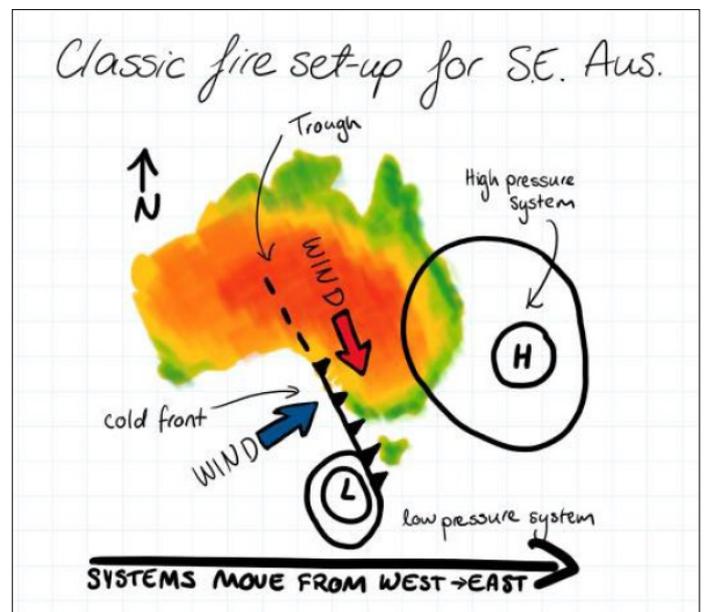
Taskforce Two, led by Lance Dixon is located in Heyfield and are based at the Licola fire camp for their first six-day rotation. The taskforce, made up on crews from FENZ Regions 1 and 2 and Forest Protection Services, are working on the Macalister 91, Licola, Mt Margaret Track Fire.

The Macalister 91 is an active fire. It is 79,228 ha and has a 357km perimeter. The area is remote with steep terrain. Crews are actively suppressing the fire as it approaches containment lines.

A total of 243 personnel, 40 appliances, 42 pieces of heavy machinery and 5 aircraft have been deployed to work on this fire.



Taskforce Two, led by Lance Dixon



For those that wonder why Victoria is the most wildfire prone area in the world

Some words from:

**David Ross | Australian Liaison of DEWLP
Senior Forest and Fire Management Officer
Operations of Forest Fire Management Victoria**

“After a long day of briefing and travel, Task force (TF) 2 made it all the way to the Licola base camp (an isolated little locality approximately an hour north east of Hayfield). The team arrived at 8:30pm on Saturday ready to be deployed onto the fire ground Sunday.

Sunday had TF 2 deployed to the Macalister - Licola - Mt Margaret Track fire. The fire is 80,000Ha and has a perimeter of 357km. The TF was initially tasked to patrol a section of control line but on the way to the fire ground tasking was changed to contain a spot over on the Marathon Sector. The TF soon had 110m of hand trial constructed to contain the fire, spending the remainder of the shift blacking out.

Today's work was in very steep and rocky terrain and thick under story.

The TF was able to demonstrate their excellent dry firefighting skills, and this was a great introduction to what should be expected to happen for the next few days at least.

A lot of the TF members commented on how unbelievably dry it is here as all the bridges crossed to get to the fire took them across totally dry creek beds.”

