

## Community Information Newsletter South West Complex Fires

**Monday, 26 March 2018**

### INCIDENT INFORMATION

There are four major fires in the South West Fire complex. These are located at Terang, Camperdown, Gazette and Garvoc. All of these fires are contained and have burnt through a total area of around 15,000 hectares. Losses include 24 houses and 63 sheds, hundreds of livestock, pasture and silage.

All four fires were started due to strong winds impacting on power infrastructure during extreme fire weather conditions.

Current road closures are:

Erreys Rd, from Cobden – Terang Rd Cobrico to Cobden – Terang Rd Cobrico.

Curdies – Leichfield Rd from Erreys Rd Cobrico to Cobden – Sth Ecklin Rd, Elingamite Nth.

Oates Rd from Cobden – Sth Ecklin Rd Elingamite Nth to Cobden – Warrnambool Rd Cobden.

### EMERGENCY RELIEF INFORMATION

Various support services are available at:  
Terang Civic Hall, 129 Mary Bradshaw Avenue  
(open 24 hours)

Cobden: Cobden Civic Hall, 53-55 Victoria Street  
(open 9am - 5pm)

### CAMPGROUND CLOSURES

Lake Elingamite Campground is closed. Refer to the DELWP website for other closures.

### WEATHER CONDITIONS

**Mon 26/3/2018:** Cloudy, winds W 25 – 40 kmh, tending SW in the middle of the day and becoming light late in the evening. Daytime Max temp around 18.

**Tues 27/3/2018:** Light winds N – NW 15 – 20 kmh in the middle of the day & becoming light late in the afternoon. Daytime Max temp around 20 degs.

**Wed 28/3/2018:** Winds N – NE 15 – 25 kmh, tending N -to NW 20 – 30 during the day,

becoming light late in the evening. Daytime Max temp around mid 20's.

### SIRENS

#### **What does a community alert siren mean?**

If a siren sounds for up to 90 seconds it indicates a CFA brigade is responding to an incident nearby. A continuous siren for five minutes means that there is a significant emergency and you must seek further information because it may affect you.

#### **What do I need to do if I hear a community alert siren sound in my community?**

If a siren sounds for five minutes, you must seek further information immediately from a source such as the emergency services' websites, the Victorian Bushfire Information Line or emergency broadcasters such as community radio stations, ABC Radio or Sky News

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

#### COMMUNITY INFORMATION POINTS

Community Information Points will be operating at Garvoc Community Hall, Main Road, Garvoc and Cobden Civic Hall, 55 Victoria Street, Cobden (open 10am – 5pm).

### STAY INFORMED

Check for the latest warnings and advice messages at [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) or the VicEmergency smartphone app, or your local emergency radio station or contact the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

Tune in to ABC Local Radio (Local ABC radio 1602 AM, 107.9 FM or stream via the ABC Listen App), commercial and designated community radio stations, or Sky News TV.

People who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech/communication impairment can contact VicEmergency Hotline via the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.

For help with English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 (freecall) and ask them to telephone VicEmergency Hotline. If you know someone who cannot speak English, provide them with this number.

Facebook ([facebook.com/vicemergency](https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency)) or Twitter ([@vicemergency](https://twitter.com/vicemergency))

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### SMOKE FROM A PEAT FIRE – EFFECTS ON AIR QUALITY AND HUMAN HEALTH

Smoke from burning peat:

- Can reduce air quality close to the actual fire
- Contains fine particles, water vapour, gases including carbon monoxide (a colourless and odourless gas that can't be seen), carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides, and may contain sulphur compounds which are odourless
- Is a health concern mainly for those closest to the fire, including emergency services personnel

□ Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) established incident air quality monitoring stations at Cobden, Camperdown and Terang on Tuesday, 20 March; and have now added two more incident stations in the Cobrico area.

These two additional incident air quality monitoring stations have been placed closer to the peat fires in the Cobrico area, to monitor conditions that may affect nearby farms and homes.

Recently these two stations have detected increases in particulate matter (particles within the smoke) and carbon monoxide in the air. This means the air quality is considered “unhealthy for everyone”. An air quality warning has been issued for affected areas.

Air quality information is available at the EPA AirWatch website:  
[www.epa.vic.gov.au/EPAirWatch](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/EPAirWatch)

Community members around the active peat fires near Cobrico need to be aware of the risks of peat smoke and understand what it means for them.

Incident Controller: \_\_\_\_\_

EPA and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have developed an expert, evidence based guide on the possible health impacts of peat smoke and the actions community members and emergency services personnel need to take based on their proximity to the peat smoke plume, as well as drifting smoke.

The [guide](#) and associated peat smoke [proximity maps](#) are available on [http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#community\\_information](http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#community_information)

You can use the guide to determine your individual risk, and decide on what action you should take.

The two key risks are carbon monoxide, generally contained to within 1km of the peat smoke plume, and particulate matter (particles), which can travel long distances from the peat smoke plume.

**Regular paper dust masks, handkerchiefs or bandannas do not protect you from fine smoke particles or gases.** Particulate matter face masks (e.g. P2 masks) will not protect against carbon monoxide exposure.

Carbon monoxide builds up gradually in the human body over a period of hours. It is also gradually removed from the body after exposure stops.

It is recommended that if you are within 1km of the peat smoke plume, you relocate to stay with family and friends overnight, however you can return during the day. Take precautionary actions, such as regular testing and monitoring of your health, if you return to visit your property.

A 24-hour health assessment centre has been established at the Terang Relief Centre, located at the Terang Civic Hall. **Community members who are within 1km of the fire are encouraged to get their carbon monoxide levels tested regularly.**

If you are within 1km - 6km of the peat smoke plume, it's recommended you avoid outdoor physical activity, anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as

prescribed by their doctor and people with asthma should follow their asthma management plan

Call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 or visit a GP for medical advice. Anyone experiencing difficulty breathing, wheezing or tightness in the chest should seek urgent medical assistance – call 000.

More information can be found at <http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief>

### **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide is a colourless and odourless gas. It is found in smoke and is formed from the incomplete combustion of fuels such as peat.

When breathed in, carbon monoxide displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen. Carbon monoxide may cause “flu-like” symptoms such as headache and tiredness, progressing to dizziness, confusion, nausea or fainting.

For further information on how smoke  
The Department of Health and Human Services  
[www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/bushfires-and-public-health](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/bushfires-and-public-health)

### **Air Pollution Concentrations and EPA's role**

EPA's air quality monitoring stations also monitor the levels of particulate matter (PM) in the air. Often referred to as PM2.5. This describes fine particles with a diameter smaller than 2.5 micrometres, (that is up to 30 times smaller than the width of a human hair) Due to their microscopic size PM2.5 can be readily inhaled and can affect the lungs if inhaled in sufficient concentrations. This is dangerous for person's health.

Mobile air quality monitoring stations from Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) will continue to support the firefighting and community recovery efforts under way in South West Victoria for as long as they are needed. The images below are of some of the EPA's air monitoring stations

### **ROAD INFORMATION**

Information on updated road closures is available via 13 11 70 or the VicRoads website [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)

### **AFTER THE FIRES**

Relief and recovery information is available at [www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief) or call VicEmergency on 1800 226 226.

If you are unsure about your safety around your home, contact council for Property Impact Assessment

### **STOCK LOSSES**

Contact Agriculture Victoria on 5336 6721.

### **VICTORIAN FARMERS FEDERATION SUPPORT AND DISASTER RELIEF**

For donations of fodder, provision of generators, and need for agistment contact 1300 882 833

The Department of Human Services offer a range of support services including personal, emotional, psychological and financial help. For information go to [www2.health.vic.gov.au/](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/)

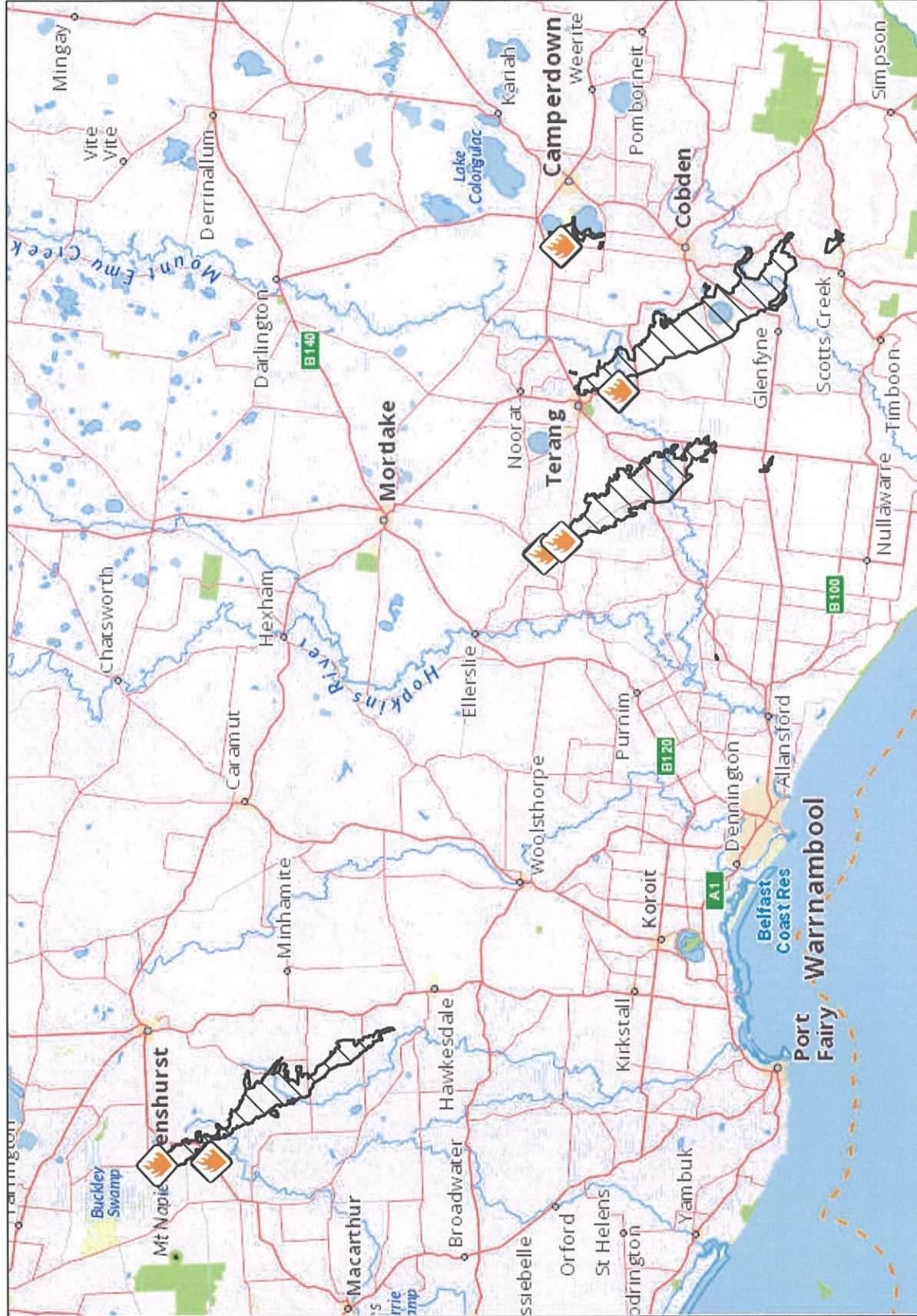
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# South West Complex Fires - 26th March 2018

## Public Information Map



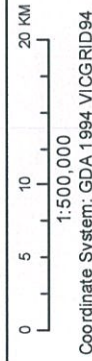
- Going
- Contained
- Under Control
- Current Burnt Area
- Neighbourhood Safer Places - Place of last resort



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Map Notes:

Disclaimer: This map is a snapshot generated from Victorian Government data. This material may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw or any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes, and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it. All persons accessing this information should make appropriate enquiries to assess the currency of the data.



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