



District Information Pack

Snowy Monaro

The Snowy Monaro area is located in south eastern New South Wales, covering approximately 1,125,00Ha of land. It includes the former Council areas of Bombala, Cooma- Monaro and Snowy River. NSW State Government amalgamated the three Local Government Areas (LGA) and formed the single Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC). The population of the area is approximately 21,791, with 2 major population centres of Cooma and Jindabyne.

Seasonal population changes in high tourism areas, high numbers of property owners travelling out of the area to work and an ageing population have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections for the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The area has on average 54 bush fires per year, of which 2 on average can be considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition in the area are:

- lightning strikes
- campfires
- accidental (power lines, slashing etc)
- arson
- escapes from legal and illegal burning

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	Geebung Street Cooma NSW 2630
District Office Phone:	02 6455 0466
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	129 MONARO A
B PSN Radio Channel:	229 MONARO B
PMR Channel:	2228 MON NTH P & 2229 MON STH P - Primary Dispatch Channels
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Southern Slopes
Local Government Area:	Snowy Monaro Regional

1.2. Topography & Vegetation

Bombala Division

Topography varies from undulating to steep timbered areas in the western and eastern areas to flat/undulating cleared and semi-timbered country through the remainder. The drier forests of the western part of the Division contrast markedly with the moist forests of the eastern part. Half the area is grassland/modified area, where curing from periods of hot/dry weather can extend the fire season into late summer and the effect of frosts can pose a fire risk in autumn and through winter. Extensive areas of pine and native plantation have been established in the eastern and southern parts of the area.

Cooma Division

Topography is diverse and includes the coastal ranges and escarpment to the east, undulating and rolling plains throughout much of the central area with high mountain ranges in the north-west. The foothills and mountains are often dissected by grassy plains and north-south running open valleys and ridges. An infestation of African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis Curvula*) covers approximately 25 percent of the area and represents a significant grass fire risk throughout the year, dependent upon the curing rates.

Snowy Division

Primarily of two landform types, namely mountain and tableland. Kosciuszko National Park covers the western and parts of the Division. The National Park has a considerable number of areas that are remote, which makes fire suppression more difficult. Fuel loads within the National Park vary depending upon vegetation type and fire history. The tablelands of the Monaro make up the eastern sections of the area with unimproved/natural grasslands dominating the landscape.

1.3. Climate

The typical / average climate in the Snowy Monaro area is cool temperate. Winters are long and cold, with temperatures regularly falling below freezing and periodic snowfalls occurring through the region.

Due to the Monaro's location (lee of the Snowy Mountains) a rain shadow effect is experienced throughout the region, creating low and irregular annual rainfall. Rain falls predominantly in summer and winter, with a slight summer dominance.

The bush fire season generally runs from October to March. In some years, good summer rains, drier than normal autumn conditions, severe winter frosts and gale force winds have created a further fire danger period throughout the winter months.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Snowy Monaro area are north-westerly or south-westerly winds accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity. Afternoon wind changes often hamper fire-fighting efforts. There are also frequently dry lightning storms occurring during the bush fire season.

1.4. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Cooma Visitors Centre recorded by the BoM (last updated 11 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	18.4	21.2	24.0	26.6	25.0	22.3	18.1	14.1	10.7	10.3	11.9	15.1
Min Temp (°C)	3.4	6.4	8.5	10.9	10.2	7.7	3.8	0.5	-1.0	-2.0	-1.5	1.0
Rainfall (mm)	46.7	70.1	56.4	56.3	50.8	51.2	40.4	29.6	39.6	28.9	31.7	36.9
3pm Temp (°C)	16.5	19.5	22.4	24.7	23.7	21.1	16.9	13.0	9.7	9.0	10.7	13.5
3pm wind (km/h)	21.7	21.3	20.7	20.3	19.5	18.2	17.6	17.1	18.3	19.2	20.6	22.2
3pm RH (%)	43	43	39	39	43	43	46	54	60	57	48	46

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Perisher Valley AWS recorded by the BoM (last updated 11 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	11.2	14.2	17.0	19.6	18.1	15.4	11.7	7.3	4.3	3.1	3.6	7.1
Min Temp (°C)	1.1	3.3	5.1	7.5	6.1	4.8	1.3	-1.4	-3.1	-3.8	-3.5	-1.1
Rainfall (mm)	194.7	199.8	168.6	158.1	104.6	170.9	124.3	176.2	206.5	210.4	246.2	184.1
3pm Temp (°C)	No data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

1.5. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

Snowy Monaro Rural Fire District has numerous radio communication blackspots due to areas of remote, steep and rugged topography across the landscape. These areas are typically native forest vegetation types that occur across most land tenures in the District i.e. National Park, State Forest, Crown and Private lands.

The ridge top fire trail network across the District provides the most reliable coverage for radio communications in these locations.

Strategies to improve coverage adopted by the District include strategically locating GRN and VHF Fire Ground repeaters at Brigade Stations for deployment to a fire when located in a radio communication blackspot.

1.6. Hazards

1.6.1. Tourism

Seasonal population changes resulting from high tourism areas. The region is popular with tourists all year round due to its unique features, camping, fishing, mountain bike riding and skiing and four-wheel driving.

Lobs Hole Camping Ground. Has up to 1500 people in the campground over the summer months.

1.6.2. Transportation

There are two (2) highways traversing the Snowy Monaro. The Monaro Hwy, The Snowy Mountains Hwy. Both highways are busy during the holiday seasons e specially winter for the ski fields. These 2 highways lead to congestion and are often attributed to many serious road traffic accidents.

1.6.3. Energy and Utilities

Snowy Hydro 2.0 –New Transmission lines will transverse the Tumut River and connect with existing TransGrid power lines in the Bago State Forest

1.6.4. Vegetation

African Love Grass. Is an infestation of African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis Curvula*) covers approximately 25 percent of the area and represents a significant grass fire risk throughout the year, dependent upon the curing rates.

1.7. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	21.1
Forests NSW	2.5
Department of Lands	0.5
Local Government	0.5
Private	74.7
All other	0.4

For more specific data on the Snowy Monaro District, please follow the link to the Snowy Monaro Bush Fire Risk Management Plan [here](#).

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

For further information regarding the Snowy Monaro District Information pack, please contact the Operational Improvement team via **email at operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au**

