



## District Information Pack

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### Chifley Lithgow

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The Chifley Lithgow District comprises the Bathurst, Oberon and Lithgow Local Government Areas. It is located on the Western edge of the Blue Mountains and continues approximately halfway between Bathurst and Orange. It reaches from Hill End and the Capertee Valley north to Jenolan Caves and the Abercrombie River south. The area covers 1,186,685 hectares or 11866.85sq km.

The Chifley/Lithgow area has, on average, 400 bush fires per year, of which one can be considered major fires. The main sources of ignition for bush/grass fires in the Lithgow area are:

- Lightning activity (mainly associated with late spring and early summer);
- Escaped fires from legal burning activities
- Illegal/careless burning activities
- Accidental ignitions by machinery, equipment and vehicles

The main Incident Management Facility is the Chifley Fire Control Centre. There are also secondary Incident Management Facilities at Lithgow FCC and Oberon FCC utilised as forward controls if required. The Local Emergency Operations Centres are also located at the Chifley, Lithgow & Oberon Fire Control Centre.

### Bathurst Local Government Area

Bathurst is a city in New South Wales's Central Tablelands and sits approximately 650m above sea level. It is 200km west-northwest of Sydney. The Bathurst region has a population of almost 45,000 people and is located on the edge of the Great Dividing Range in the Macquarie River Plain. A levee bank protects the city from occasional flood events. The Macquarie River divides Bathurst, with the CBD located on the western side of the river.

The Great Western Highway begins in the centre of Sydney and ends at Bathurst. Two main state highways start at Bathurst: the Mitchell Highway to Bourke and the Mid-Western Highway to Hay. Bathurst is midway between the regional road route from Canberra to Mudgee and the Hunter Region. Bathurst is also situated on the Main Western railway line that starts at Sydney Central and proceeds 232km by rail to Bathurst.

### Lithgow Local Government Area

Lithgow is a town located within the central tablelands of New South Wales. It sits on the western slopes of the Blue Mountains at approximately 920m above sea level. Lithgow is on the Great Western Highway, 150km and approximately 2 hours drive west of Sydney, with a population of approximately 21,750 people.

Lithgow is the westernmost end of the electric rail network for NSW, being the termination location for westbound Sydney Trains services. The main road transport routes servicing Lithgow include the Great

Western Highway, both east and west, Bells Line of Road to the east, Jenolan Caves Road to the south and the Castlereagh Highway to the north.

### **Oberon Local Government Area**

Oberon is a town located within the central tablelands of New South Wales and sits on the western edge of the Great Dividing Range. It is 180km and approximately 3 hours drive west of Sydney. The township of Oberon sits 1113m above sea level, and the highest point in the local government area is near Edith and 1395m above sea level. and has a population of approximately 5,400 people.

The main road transport routes from Oberon include O'Connell Road to the north, Duckmaloi and Jenolan Caves Roads to the west and Abercrombie Road.

## **1.1. Contact Information**

<b>District Office Address:</b>	27 Hampden Park Road Kelso NSW 2795
<b>District Office Phone:</b>	1300 258 737
<b>After Hours Contact:</b>	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
<b>A PSN Radio Channel:</b>	106 CHIFLITH A – <b>Primary Dispatch Channel</b>
<b>B PSN Radio Channel:</b>	206 CHIFLITH B
<b>PMR Channel:</b>	2206 CHIFL P/2218 LTHGW P
<b>ESO Conversion Chart:</b>	Please see the file in the folder for relevant conversion information
<b>Fire Weather Forecast Area:</b>	Central Ranges
<b>Local Government Area:</b>	Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon

## **1.2. Topography**

### **Bathurst**

Two primary land formation types are evident within the Bathurst Region: the Bathurst Basin and the Tablelands areas. The central basin area consists primarily of granite rich soils, with a few areas of underlying basalt. Sandstones, conglomerates, greywacke, siltstones, limestone and minor volcanic formations characterise the tableland areas north of the central basin. The area to the south, in addition to the formations north of the basin, includes shales, chart, basalt and granite features.

### **Lithgow**

The Blue Mountains terminates in a line of sandstone-rich cliffs that form the edge of the Hartley, Kanimbla and Megalong valleys. Lithgow sits in this valley, further surrounded by a varied landscape of steep mountainous terrain and open, flowing grazing land. The Lithgow region is also home to the Capertee Valley, the second-widest canyon in the world – larger even than the Grand Canyon. Heavily forested wilderness areas dominate the northeastern side of the area.

## **Oberon**

The region's topography ranges from relatively flat plateaus with rolling hills and grazing land to steep mountainous areas of radiata pine plantation and National Park.

### **1.3. Vegetation**

Chifley Lithgow District has a combination of grassland (pasture) and timbered areas throughout. There are also large areas of pine plantations located in the high country.

Grasslands typically begin to cure during November and are fully cured by January. Fuel loads in grassland areas vary based on grazing levels and rainfall received during the winter/spring and the previous season.

Surface fuels in the timbered areas in the east average around 24t/ha, with it reducing to around 15t/ha as you go west with mainly surface and near-surface fuel.

Variations in landscape, soils and climate across the area have given rise to a great diversity of flora and fauna. There is a vague north-south line of demarcation between eastern and western species of both plants and animals. This roughly follows the line of the Great Divide and forms a limit of distribution for several species. The wandering nature of the Great Divide and its dissection by deep, penetrating valleys from east and west blur the line and create unique natural communities.

### **1.4. Climate**

The typical average climate is cold to very cold winters (mean temps 1.3°-11.2°) followed by hot, dry summers (11.5°-24.9°), with average rains experienced per month throughout the year and average annual rainfall of 862mm. The bush fire season generally runs from October to March yet has, on occasion, been extended when the weather conditions have created a landscape more susceptible to fire occurrences and expansion.

The weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Chifley Lithgow area are high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity associated with strong, gusty north-westerly winds. Dry lightning storms occur frequently during the Bush Fire Danger Period. January is usually the month with the highest rainfall volume and maximum temperatures.

## **Bathurst**

Bathurst is in Australia's cool temperate climate zone, defined as having mild to warm summers and cool to cold winters. Regular summer thunderstorms are common, resulting from the flat plains country to the west, leading into the mountainous nature of the country around Bathurst and assisting the development of storm cells. In winter, light to moderate snowfalls occur yearly on the higher peaks around Bathurst, but snow in the CBD is uncommon.

## **Lithgow**

Lithgow is in Australia's cool temperate climate zone, defined as having mild to warm summers and cool to cold winters. Summer thunderstorms are a common occurrence, often moving in from the west. Snowfalls on the higher peaks around the region are not uncommon during winter but snow in the CBD occurs less often.

## Oberon

The majority of the Oberon area is in Australia's cool temperate climate zone, defined as having mild to warm summers and cool to cold winters. Frosts occur regularly during autumn, winter and spring. The elevation and windward positioning of the area lends itself to moderate and occasionally heavy snowfalls during each winter. Some parts of Oberon, however, sit within Australia's alpine climate zone, which is characterised by a mild summer and a cold to very cold winter.

### 1.5. Average Weather Data

#### Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Bathurst Agricultural Station recorded by the BoM (last updated 24 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	20.0	23.5	26.4	28.1	27.2	24.7	20.2	15.7	12.3	11.3	13.0	16.4
Min Temp (°C)	6.2	9.0	11.5	13.5	13.2	10.8	6.7	3.3	1.5	0.6	1.3	3.3
Rainfall (mm)	59.2	63.6	64.9	68.0	57.8	53.6	42.1	41.4	44.3	48.0	49.9	46.8
3pm Temp (°C)	18.6	21.8	25.4	26.8	25.8	23.5	19.3	15.0	11.5	10.5	12.2	15.3
3pm wind (km/h)	11.3	11.5	12.1	11.3	10.1	9.7	8.9	7.8	7.6	9.0	10.7	11.2
3pm RH (%)	48	46	49	42	46	46	49	57	63	61	54	52

#### Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Oberon (Jenolan Caves Road) recorded by the BoM (last updated 2 April 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	19.4	22.4	25.0	25.6	24.6	21.8	16.7	12.8	10.0	9.4	11.5	15.3
Min Temp (°C)	5.7	8.1	10.3	11.6	11.7	10.0	6.4	3.2	1.5	0.2	0.9	2.9
Rainfall (mm)	77.8	78.0	87.2	93.1	95.9	85.8	71.2	63.0	84.6	80.6	83.0	66.2
3pm Temp (°C)	No data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

## 1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

In the Chifley Lithgow area, Comms start to drop off once travel commences down into the valleys where reception can become quite patchy, most notably around:

- Wolgan Valley
- The Bridle Track
- The Six-foot Track
- Glen Davis Road
- Jerong, Burruga, and southern Oberon area covered by PMR can be intermittent black spots

## 1.7. Hazards

### 1.7.1. Transportation

- The Great Western Hwy is the main transport route running from Sydney to Bathurst.
- The Castlereagh Hwy takes you North to Mudgee from Lithgow.
- Sofala Rd takes you to Mudgee from Bathurst.
- Jenolan Caves Rd/Duckmaloi Rd from Lithgow takes you to Oberon.
- Abercrombie Rd from Oberon takes you south.
- O'Connell Rd from Bathurst takes you to Oberon.
- Mitchell Hwy from Bathurst takes you to Orange.
- Mid Western Hwy from Bathurst takes you to Blayney.
- Trunkey Rd from Bathurst takes you south.
- The main Western rail line goes through Lithgow & Bathurst.

### 1.7.2. Mining – Lithgow Area

There are extensive coal resources underground across the area. Mining is the major industry within the local area, with both open-cut and underground mining operations.

### 1.7.3. Agriculture

- Traditional agricultural operations are present throughout livestock and cropping.
- Large Pine plantations exist in higher altitudes.

### 1.7.4. Aviation

- Bathurst Airport is a small commercial and recreational airport serviced by a daily commercial passenger service (to Sydney). Aircraft movements at Bathurst Airport are between 4000-4500 annually, with stores for a maximum of 20,000L of Jet A1 and Avgas aviation fuel.
- Private airstrips are also scattered through the area.

### 1.7.5. Energy and Utilities

- Mount Piper Power Station located near Portland.
- Crudine Ridge Wind farm located near Sallys Flat north of Bathurst

### 1.7.6. Other

- Marrangaroo Army Depot, Reserve Road Marrangaroo
- Used for ammunition and chemical weapon storage.
- Unexploded ordnance is present on site.

## 1.8. land management authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	41.9
Forestry Corporation of NSW	12.2
Crown Lands	4.4
Local Government	0.3
Private	39.9
All other	1.3

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

*Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.*

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For further information regarding the Chifley Lithgow District Information pack, please contact the Operational Improvement team via **email at [operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au)**

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