



District Information Pack

Hawkesbury

2024/2025

1. District Details

The Hawkesbury District consists of the entire City of Hawkesbury, which comprises an area of 2793 square kilometres to the northwest of Sydney, extending from Windsor in the south, Berambing in the west, 80km north of Windsor on the Putty Road and east to the Old Great North Road.

The perimeter of the Hawkesbury District includes approximately 48 kilometres of river, 32 kilometres of undulating country and 193 kilometres of rough precipitous broken country in the west and north, with the area covered by the Hawkesbury BFMC being 277,800 hectares. Over 69% of the Hawkesbury is National Park (Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo & Dharug). 1% State Land, 1% Local Government, 1% Forest Corporation, and 28% being Private Lands.

The current population of the area is in excess of approximately 67,207 people according to the 2021 Census. Over 35% of the population live within the township boundaries of Windsor and Richmond which also include Hobartville, South Windsor & Bligh Park. The major population centres are Windsor and Richmond where over 94% of residents live in urban Interface. The other 6% live in small and geographically diverse hamlets such as Upper Colo, Colo Heights, St Albans and Lower Macdonald in the north to Pitt Town, Maraylya and Vineyard in the east and Kurrajong Heights, Bowen Mountain, Mountain Lagoon and Bilpin in the west which are mainly rural properties.

In total, approximately 65% of the population of the Hawkesbury City is serviced by the NSW Rural Fire Brigades.

The Hawkesbury area has on average 265 bush fires per year, of which 20 are typically considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition in the Hawkesbury area are:

- Motor vehicle fires
- Arson
- Accidental
- Lightning
- Escaped landowner burns

There are a high number of property owners who travel out of the area to work which has the potential to impact on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The Hawkesbury District has 21 Rural Fire Brigades which are Village 1 and Village 2 with a variation in fire-fighting appliances inclusive; Cat 1, Cat 7, Cat 9, Pumpers and PCs. Additionally, The Hawkesbury District has a Communications and Catering Brigade. The District has 9 Group Officers.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	8 Macquarie Road Wilberforce NSW 2756
District Office Phone:	02 4560 6400
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Channel:	117 HWKSB A
B PSN Channel:	217 HWKSB B
PMR Channel:	2215 HWKSB P Primary Dispatch Channel
ESO Conversion:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Greater Sydney Area
Local Government Area:	Hawkesbury

1.2. Topography

Hawkesbury LGA is influenced by the Blue Mountains and Great Dividing Range to the north west as well as some of Sydney's significant river systems. As a result, the topography varies widely.

Two thirds of the LGA is located in National Parks equating to a total of approximately 1,930 square kilometres. These comprise a range of vegetation communities that contribute to the biodiversity in the LGA and is dominated by several river systems, associated with the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers with the majority of the urban area of Hawkesbury LGA is prone to at least 1:100 year flooding.

Flooding is prevalent in areas around the lower topographical areas such as North Richmond, Richmond, Windsor, Wilberforce and Pitt Town.

The landform ranges from 13m elevation at St Albans to 517m elevation at Mountain Lagoon.

1.3. Vegetation

The vegetation within the Hawkesbury District is generally broken up into 3 main categories consisting of: Cumberland Plain vegetation, Hawkesbury Sandstone Gully Forests, which is associated with sheltered hillsides and moist gullies, and Hawkesbury Sandstone Ridge-Top Woodland which is associated with dry plateaus and ridges.

The Hawkesbury Sandstone Gully Forest occurs extensively around the Kurrajong Heights area and along creeks meeting the Grose River. The Hawkesbury Sandstone Ridge Top Woodland presents across the broader parts of the district resulting in dry and exposed sandstone country that holds little water.

Due to the wide variation in topography, landscape, soil and climate across the area, Hawkesbury has given rise to a great diversity of Flora and Fauna. The District is home to an amazing array of wildlife in its hinterlands and reserves, especially where bushland is still relatively intact. Koalas, flying foxes, platypus, goannas, snakes, wallabies and many species of gliders, as well as over 200 species of birds inhabit the area (70% of the district's national park was lost in the Gospers Mountain Fire in 2019/2020).

1.4. Climate

The typical climate in the Hawkesbury area is warm temperate experiencing warm to hot summers and cool to mild winters with predominately summer/autumn rainfall and dry winter and spring. The bushfire season generally runs from October to March and may occasionally be brought forward due to dry winter conditions.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Hawkesbury area are a dry winter with increased winds transitioning into spring, providing potential fire conditions for the grasslands. North-westerly winds accompanied by high temperatures and low relative humidity providing weather conditions conducive with large spreading bush fires during the bushfire danger period.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Richmond – UWS Hawkesbury recorded by the BoM (Last updated 31 May 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	25.0	27.1	29.1	29.4	28.9	27.1	23.8	20.3	17.4	17.3	18.9	22.1
Min Temp (°C)	10.5	13.1	15.5	16.8	16.8	15.0	11.3	7.3	4.7	3.2	4.4	7.1
Rainfall (mm)	57.1	73.5	75.4	97.1	94.4	93.5	68.2	55.8	60.1	45.3	41.8	41.9
3pm Temp (°C)	Nil data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Putty Road, north of Colo Heights, further you travel north when you leave the ridge tops travelling down the valleys reception can become patchy
- St Albans, Upper Macdonald, Higher McDonald and Lower McDonald
- Bilpin travelling west (towards Bell) , once travel commences down into the valleys reception can become quite patchy
- Parts of Upper Colo and Lower Portland

When using Fire Ground radio, coverage can be quite limited depending on the terrain.

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation

Bells line of road is the main transportation route between Richmond and Lithgow running in an east-west direction for the most part. If this main road is closed it can cause substantial economic pressure as this road is an arterial for Logistics Transport feeding larger parts of the Sydney and metropolitan area as well as issues for residents during major bushfires.

Putty Road is another main transportation route stretching 168 kilometres long rural road starting in the Wilberforce area situated north west of Windsor that links to the Hunter Region.

1.7.2. Agricultural

The uses based on agriculture include the following: Irrigated plants, Vegetables grown in market gardens and protected cropping structures, Nurseries, Turf, Intensive Animals Poultry meat and egg production, Grazing animals, Cattle, Horse studs, agistment/boarding and horses associated with rural residential use, Rural Tourism uses, Farm gate sales, Horse riding and Farm Stay Accommodation.

1.7.3. Aviation

The Richmond Air Base is located on Dight Street Richmond and houses a lot of the Defence aircraft including the C130 Hercules. The base subsequently accommodates for the NSW RFS aircraft. There is a substantial amount of aviation fuel located on base along with a lot of other hazards although the base has its own Defence Firefighters and Appliances.

1.7.4. Special Fire Protection Facilities

The Hawkesbury District has 1 hospital located in Windsor as well as a number of aged care facilities in the main township of Richmond and Windsor.

Across the District there are twenty-two (22) Public schools, four (4) High schools, sixty-two (62) child-care facilities and a University/TAFE facility.

1.7.5. Water

The main catchment area in the Hawkesbury District is associated with the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system which leads from Warragamba Dam.

It should be noted that access to the hydrants within the Hawkesbury District are very limited due to the fact that the northern parts of the district are not on reticulated water.

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	69
Forest Corporation	1
Department of Lands	1
Local Government	1
Private	28

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

