



District Information Pack

North West

The North West Zone covers 57,297 square kilometres with the main population centres of Walgett, Coonamble, Warren and Nyngan.

The Zone has 77 brigades with 1371 volunteers. Brigade composition is mostly rural and remote rural brigades. Only 1 brigade has CABA (Nyngan HQ) otherwise FRNSW provides cover.

Absentee landowners, seasonal workers (eg harvest contractors), tourism at Lightning Ridge and in the Warrumbungle National Park have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The North West area has on average 20 bush fires per year, of which 1 can be considered to be a major fire. The main sources of ignition in the North West area are:

- Ignition from farming machinery
- Electrical storms
- arson

In agricultural areas the landowners/managers are an important source of local information. Landowners/managers can also prioritise assets to be protected on their properties.

Fences in agricultural areas should only be cut as a last resort and not for convenience of access.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	10 Buckley Drive Coonamble NSW 2829
District Office Phone:	02 6822 7700
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	134 NTHWST A - Primary Dispatch Channels
B PSN Radio Channel:	234 NTHWST B
PMR Channel:	NA
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	North Western, Upper central West Plains
Local Government Area:	Bogan, Coonamble, Walgett, Warren

1.2. Topography

The topography does not vary much throughout the Zone. As in the north the land north of Walgett is the start of the outback with opal mining to the north and north west and the junction of the Namoi and Barwon Rivers just west of Walgett. To the south east the Pilliga National Park can be found with its sandy soil and scrubby vegetation. As you come further south and to the east of Coonamble you have the Warrumbungle National Park on the edge of the Zone with forested terrain reaching elevations of 1200 metres. This area then rolls down into flat grazed and cropping land towards Coonamble then becoming marsh land as part of the Macquarie Marshes west of Quambone.

To the south leading down through Warren and south as well as west of Nyngan the area is flat with the land mainly used for farming.

1.3. Vegetation

The area is primarily grassland (98%) with the remainder forest (2%).

Amongst the grassland the land is used for primary industry in the areas of cotton and cereal crops as well as sheep and cattle.

Within the Pilliga, the vegetation is native white cypress and ironbark. Along the rivers (Bogan, Namoi, Macquarie and Castlereagh) the vegetation is a mix of “box” species.

1.4. Climate

The typical/average climate in the Namoi-Gwydir area is characterised by warm to hot summers, moderate and variable rainfall and a winter of cool clear days and cold frosty nights, with often a rapid transition of perhaps a month from summer to winter.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Namoi-Gwydir area are north-westerly winds accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity. Dry lightning storms occur frequently during the bush fire season. The Bush Fire Danger Period runs from 1st October through to 30th March, however prevailing weather has the potential to extent outside this normal timeframe

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Nyngan Airport recorded by the BoM (last updated 19 april 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	26.6	30.1	33.0	34.4	33.4	30.5	25.7	20.7	17.0	16.5	18.6	22.7
Min Temp (°C)	11.5	15.1	17.9	19.7	19.3	16.5	12.0	7.78	5.0	3.8	4.8	7.8
Rainfall (mm)	34.0	36.8	43.0	51.1	46.7	41.9	34.2	35.6	33.7	28.8	29.3	27.4
3pm Temp (°C)	25.4	28.7	31.6	33.0	32.0	29.4	25.1	20.1	16.6	15.9	17.8	21.7
3pm wind (km/h)	14.2	13.4	13.2	12.8	12.0	12.0	10.8	10.5	11.2	12.1	13.1	14.1
3pm RH (%)	34	30	29	31	36	37	40	49	55	52	44	38

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Coonamble Airport AWS recorded by the BoM (last updated 19 April 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	27.6	30.8	33.2	35.3	33.9	31.1	26.3	31.1	26.3	17.2	19.4	23.7
Min Temp (°C)	11.5	15.5	18.0	20.5	19.4	17.0	12.1	7.3	5.1	3.7	4.1	7.4
Rainfall (mm)	40.6	60.5	64.3	43.8	53.6	55.1	36.5	34.3	46.1	32.1	22.4	31.3
3pm Temp (°C)	25.9	28.9	31.5	33.2	31.8	29.5	25.0	20.6	16.9	16.0	18.2	22.4
3pm wind (km/h)	19.3	18.2	18.5	16.4	16.2	15.6	15.5	15.7	16.2	16.1	18.0	18.1
3pm RH (%)	30	30	27	29	34	33	37	42	52	52	42	36

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Walgett recorded by the BoM (last updated 31 March 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	28.1	31.9	34.6	35.4	34.0	31.4	26.8	21.7	18.0	17.4	19.8	23.8
Min Temp (°C)	12.8	16.3	18.9	21.3	17.0	14.3	13.1	18.5	15.5	11.1	17.3	28.2
Rainfall (mm)	37.4	41.2	43.0	61.3	57.0	41.3	33.1	38.5	35.5	31.1	27.3	28.2
3pm Temp (°C)	27.2	30.5	32.9	33.9	33.0	30.6	26.3	21.3	17.7	17.1	19.2	23.2
3pm wind (km/h)	10.1	9.9	9.1	9.7	9.3	8.8	8.1	7.7	8.1	8.4	9.6	9.9
3pm RH (%)	32	30	30	32	35	37	38	47	53	49	41	34

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Area to the north and west of Coolabah
- Patches around the Grawin and Glengarry Opal Fields
- North of Hermidale and along the Barrier Highway around Hermidale

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Fire Behaviour

The North West Zone has a history of large fires which in unfavourable conditions can travel quickly in a short period of time, however do not usually burn for more than 3 days.

1.7.2. Black Soil & Sand Driving

In many areas of the Zone, black soil and sand (Pilliga) create challenging driving conditions for NSW RFS appliances. This is particularly relevant for all off road driving on unsealed roads and for shoulders along sealed roads. As when the roads get wet, they will become un-roadworthy to drive upon and often result in the vehicle becoming bogged. Crews need to be competent in sand driving before venturing off formed roads and when rain is forecasted and about it hit, be ready to pull out.

1.7.3. Cereal Crops

Between October to January, harvest is undertaken starting in the north of the Zone in October and finishing in the south in the new year. Standing crops provide increased fuel loads and fire intensity. Crews need to be aware that the Grass Fire Danger Index (GFDI) in cropping country prior to and during harvest may be higher than published. At other times of the year (post-harvest) there is a layer of stubble in paddocks that will carry fire in the right conditions.

1.7.4. Open Mine Shafts

There are open mines in the Lightning Ridge and Grawin Area. These openings can be as small as 600mm round and are not easily identified as the vegetation can obscure them. Vehicles are to remain on the designated roads and crews need to remain vigilant and watch where they are walking.

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of BFMC Area
Data not available	

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

