



RFS

District Information Pack

Southern Tablelands

The Southern Tablelands District area is located in the southern ranges of New South Wales, stretching from the lower Blue Mountains to Wyangla Dam in the north, Burrinjuck Dam in the south-west to the Shoalhaven River in the east and borders onto the north east of the Australian Capital Territory. The area is 14,551 square kilometres (1,455,100 hectares) comprising Yass Valley 4,089 square kilometres, Goulburn/Mulwaree 3,232 square kilometres and Upper Lachlan 7,230 square kilometres

The population of the Southern Tablelands area is approximately 48,000 people. The major population centres are Goulburn, Yass, Marulan, Murrumbateman, Crookwell and Gunning, with numerous outlying townships and villages. The area has a large percentage of absentee landowners, or landowners who are away during the day at work.

The area experiences high tourism numbers, absentee landowners, or landowners who are away during the day at work and different types of industry in the area have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire:

The Southern Tablelands area has on average 265 bush fires per year, of which 5 could be considered to be large fires. Major fires occur sporadically with about 3 in a 5-year period. The frequency of significant or major fires has varied between the districts comprising the Southern Tablelands area. Generally, Goulburn/Mulwaree has a history of major fires occurring in a cycle of 5 to 7 years, whereas Upper Lachlan has an approximately 7 to 10-year cycle and Yass Valley has a 2.5-year cycle of major fires. The main sources of ignition in the area are:

- Lightning
- Escapes from legal burning off
- Illegal burning off
- Human error
- arson

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	1410 Laidlaw Street Yass NSW 2582
District Office Phone:	02 6226 3100
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	142 STHTB A
B PSN Radio Channel:	242 STHTB B
PMR Channel:	2238 STHTB P – Primary Dispatch Channel
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Southern Ranges
Local Government Area:	Yass Valley, Upper Lachlan, Goulburn/Mulwaree

1.2. Topography

Southern Tablelands has a diverse topography that includes the coastal escarpment to the east, an undulating and rolling plains through much of the central and west area and high mountain ranges in the north and south. A large percentage of the district is used for agricultural purposes (livestock, cropping). The remainder is made up of villages, towns and rural subdivisions.

1.3. Vegetation

The natural temperate grassland of the Southern Tablelands is dominated by moderately tall (25-50cm) to tall (50cm-1m), dense to open tussock grasses with up to 70 percent of species being forbs. The area may be treeless or contain up to 10 percent cover of trees, shrubs or sedges. In the Southern Tablelands natural temperate grasslands are located at altitudes between 560 and 1,200 metres in valleys influenced by cold air drainage and in broad plains.

1.4. Climate

The typical / average climate in the Southern Tablelands area is temperate to cool characterised by warm to hot summers and cool winters, with peak rainfall generally occurring during winter and spring.

As the area is both large and diverse, rainfall varies considerably. Some areas experience average rainfall of approximately 800mm to 1000mm per year, whereas some areas experience a lower average annual rainfall (e.g. 600mm in the north of the Upper Lachlan Shire towards the Abercrombie River). Generally, it can be stated that rainfall is both unreliable and at its lowest during summer months, resulting in substantial curing of pastoral and grazing land which covers a large proportion of the area.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Southern Tablelands area are north/north westerly winds, although in late afternoons southerly and easterly winds may occur for short periods. Lightning strikes during storms occur frequently in the bush fire season.

The bush fire season generally runs from October to March/April.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Goulburn Airport AWS recorded by the BoM (last updated 18 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	20.0	23.1	25.9	28.0	26.4	23.9	20.0	15.9	12.5	11.9	13.4	16.7
Min Temp (°C)	5.3	8.2	10.7	12.9	12.7	10.2	5.8	2.5	1.4	0.4	0.7	3.0
Rainfall (mm)	51.6	64.2	56.8	56.4	56.0	50.7	30.6	34.4	57.3	31.9	44.0	43.8
3pm Temp (°C)	18.2	21.1	24.2	26.1	24.9	22.5	18.9	14.8	11.3	10.5	12.2	15.1
3pm wind (km/h)	25.3	23.7	23.0	22.2	21.4	20.5	19.8	20.7	22.2	23.2	26.5	26.4
3pm RH (%)	46	45	39	41	45	46	46	54	63	61	52	50

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Burrinjuck Dam recorded by the BoM (last updated 16 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	20.5	24.1	27.7	29.8	29.0	26.1	21.1	16.2	12.5	11.7	13.5	16.9
Min Temp (°C)	8.4	11.1	13.7	15.6	15.7	13.4	9.6	6.4	4.2	3.0	3.7	5.6
Rainfall (mm)	85.2	74.5	62.8	63.4	56.2	62.1	64.3	79.3	95.4	100.0	97.7	83.4
3pm Temp (°C)	No data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Crookwell Post Office recorded by the BoM (last updated 17 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	18.3	21.4	25.0	26.5	25.9	23.6	18.4	13.9	10.3	9.5	11.0	14.7
Min Temp (°C)	4.6	6.7	9.0	10.7	10.7	8.8	5.0	2.3	0.6	-0.4	0.3	2.1
Rainfall (mm)	76.5	68.2	67.8	70.0	55.6	59.3	57.6	66.0	88.6	84.0	89.7	74.6
3pm Temp (°C)	No data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Upper Lachlan District along the Abercrombie River to the north of Taralga, patchy in certain locations
- Upper Lachlan District north of Taralga in certain parts of the Jerrong road area are patchy
- Upper Lachlan District in certain parts of the Lachlan River to the west of Bigga, patchy in low areas
- Goulburn Mulwaree District to the south in the Stewarts Crossing area Windellama
- Goulburn Mulwaree District South of Tallong in the Shoalhaven river gorge country East of Bungonia as far south as Windellama

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation

The area is a major interconnecting route between Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra (the Hume, Federal and Barton Highways run through the area), and the main Southern railway line. Secondary routes such as the Lachlan Valley Way and the Burley Griffin Way provide road transport links between south western NSW, Griffith, the MIA, Queensland and the ACT. Historically both the road and rail lines have been severed by fire events.

1.7.2. Energy and Utilities

The area has the national electricity grid running through it (TransGrid has a major facility on the south western outskirts of Yass), as well as the main gas pipelines carrying natural gas and ethane between Moomba (SA) and Sydney with spur lines to cities such as Goulburn. There are windfarms located within the area. Major Telstra exchange facilities are situated in the area (e.g. Goulburn, Yass, Crookwell) and there are numerous automatic rural exchanges throughout the area; some of these exchanges are an integral part of Telstra's fibre optic network.

1.7.3. Economic

There are large pine plantations 3460 hectares of both state and private in the Yass Valley Shire, valued in excess of \$15 million. Pine plantations are very susceptible to fire and because of their value prevention of fire is a high priority.

There is some heavy industry in the area, especially around Goulburn (manufacturing, abattoirs, quarrying etc.). There are also light industrial enterprises in rural areas.

The major industries involve many facets of primary production, including cereal crops, livestock production, with some specialty orchards, viticulture, hobby farming, equine complexes and agri-tourism industries.

1.7.4. Tourism

High tourism area all year round (camping, bush walking, Hume and Hovell Walking Trail, water sports etc), the main focal points being Bungonia State Recreation Area, Wombeyan and Wee Jasper, Wakefield Park (motor racing), Burrinjuck Dam, as well as numerous farm stay facilities and wineries.

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	3.00
Forests NSW	2.00
Department of Lands	2.50
Local Government	0.50
Private	91.50
All other (RTA, State Rail)	0.50

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

