



RFS

District Information Pack

Far North Coast

The Coffs Coast Team is centred on Coffs Harbour and Bellingen, on the NSW North Coast. The Far North Coast Team is centred on Murwillumbah on the NSW Far North Coast and is comprised of the Tweed, Byron and Ballina LGAs. On the southern escarpment, the growing town of Alstonville leads down to Ballina and its satellite suburbs open the way to the Byron shire and its coastal and hinterland villages, such as Lennox Head, Suffolk Park and Newrybar.

The increasingly popular international tourism hotspot of Byron Bay acts as a gateway to more hinterland tourism areas such as Mullumbimby, which are less dense in their development. The population of Ballina LGA is 41,644, Byron LGA 32,119 and Tweed LGA 91,210, giving the Far North Coast Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) area an approximate total population of 164 973. The major population centres are spread throughout the coastal fringe as well as hinterland regional centres such as Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah. A number of villages are also spread through the hinterland of the three local government areas.

Many popular tourist destinations are located within the Far North Coast BFMC's jurisdiction. These destinations can be characterised by two patterns of development: coastal and hinterland tourist facilities. Byron Shire has approximately 1.6 million tourist visitations per annum, with Ballina 1.797 million tourist visitations per annum and Tweed 1.776 million tourist visitations per annum.

Many of the coastal areas contain high densities of tourist facilities. These range from Caravan Parks and Camp Grounds to Five Star Resorts and include the internationally popular destination; Byron Bay. Hinterland tourist facilities are often less dense in their pattern of development and can include bed and breakfast, eco resorts or farm-stay style accommodation. Those facilities in bush fire prone areas are of particular concern due to their popularity during the warmer months and the unpredictability of the tourist's response to bush fire.

The bush fire season generally runs from September through November although statutorily extends to March most seasons due to hot summer temperatures and strong coastal winds. Fire agencies attend an average of approximately 460 bush, grass and/or scrub fires per year. The main sources of ignition in the Far North Coast BFMC area are:

- fire escape from legal or illegal fires (mainly prior to the introduction of the bush fire danger period)
- arson
- lightning strikes

The nominated Incident Management Facility is the Tweed Fire Control Centre located at 92 Lundberg Drive Murwillumbah, 2484. Phone 02 6671 5500

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	32 Gordon Street Mullumbimby NSW 2482
District Office Phone:	02 6671 5500
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	112 FNC A
B PSN Radio Channel:	212 FNC B
PMR Channel:	2210 FNC P – Primary Dispatch Channel
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Far North Coast
Local Government Area:	Tweed, Byron, Ballina

1.2. Topography

The area is predominately coastal with significant areas of sugar cane plantations and National Parks opening on to improved pasture land and grasslands in places.

Changing land use is also of concern. A noticeable shift in the rural areas has occurred from primary production to rural living. This shift can result in an increase in fuel loads, particularly where grazing is reduced. Multiple Occupancies are common throughout both the coast and hinterland areas of Byron and Tweed Shires.

Although exceptions occur, they are of particular concern due to access, water supply and fuel (vegetation) management issues.

1.3. Vegetation

The area is predominately coastal with significant areas of sugar cane plantations and National Parks opening on to improved pasture land and grasslands in places.

1.4. Climate

The typical / average climate in the Far North Coast BFMC area could be described as temperate to sub-tropical. Although the area can experience high rainfall, this can be very seasonal, the driest months on average being August to October and wettest in late summer and autumn. The bush fire season generally runs from September through November although statutorily extends to March most seasons due to hot summer temperatures and strong coastal winds.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Far North Coast BFMC area are strong north to north westerly winds, with high temperatures and low humidity. Worst seasons occur after prolonged periods of drought. The season can often start “early” in July or August if drought conditions prevail.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Ballina 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)	24.9	26.3	27.6	28.4	28.1	27.1	25.0	22.5	20.4	20.1	21.4	23.6
Min Temp (°C)	14.2	16.5	18.4	19.8	19.7	18.6	15.4	12.2	9.9	8.8	8.9	11.6
Rainfall (mm)	107.1	117.5	144.0	170.6	223.6	225.4	182.2	158.0	188.8	107.4	75.3	68.1
3pm Temp (°C)	22.8	24.4	25.9	26.7	26.5	25.4	23.4	21.0	19.0	18.7	19.8	21.6
3pm wind (km/h)	24.08	24.8	24.7	24.4	23.0	21.5	18.9	16.8	15.9	18.1	19.9	23.7
3pm RH (%)	62	65	64	67	68	67	65	64	62	59	55	59

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Wilsons Creek
- Upper Wilsons Creek
- Patches on the M1 between Ocean Shores and Pottsville –
- Upper Burringbar Rd and Gillies Rd west of Burringbar township
- Pimble Valley Rd and western end of Crabbes Ck Rd west of Crabbes Ck township.
- Around Palmers Road and Kyogle Road Terragon
- Byrill Creek
- Federal/ Goonengerry area near Rosebank bridge
- McAuleys lane Myocum

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation and Freight

The Pacific Highway (M1) is the main arterial highway dissecting the Far North Coast team, running North – South along the coastal strip.

Further inland multiple minor roads wind their way through the hinterland, servicing smaller communities and localities.

Various Airports located at Ballina, Coolangatta, Tyagarah and Murwillumbah

1.7.2. Agriculture

Whilst traditional agricultural industries abound throughout the zone, the area boasts a large sugar cane industry and refineries along it's coastal strip, which provides fire risk during the firing of cane prior to harvest.

Activities such as manufacturing, bulk gas and fuel distribution, timber mills, horticultural, agricultural and food production activities are prevalent throughout the Far North Coast team area.

1.7.3. Energy and Utilities

Essential Energy is the primary provider of electrical substations and high voltage infrastructure throughout the Far North Coast.

1.7.4. Other Identified hazards

- Sugar Refinery – Condong: Food production & miscellaneous hazards
- Bulk Fuel Distributors – Various Locations

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of BFMC Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	12.33
Department of Lands	5.14
Local Government – Ballina	1.14
Local Government – Byron	0.09
Local Government – Tweed	1.89
Private/Other	79.41

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

