



RFS

District Information Pack

Tamworth

The Tamworth RFS District is in the Tamworth Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA). The LGA is 9,893 km² with an approximate population of 62,000.

The major population centres are Tamworth (population 42,872), Manilla (2,550) and Barraba (1,410). The Tamworth area also has many small towns, villages and localities. Tamworth has a diverse economy, major industries include retail, manufacturing, health, agriculture, tourism, education and aviation.

There are 37 brigades in the Tamworth District with approximately 1140 members. A sizeable percentage of brigades are rural, or farm based. The district has three brigades equipped with Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus in and around Tamworth City.

Rural residential development around Tamworth, absentee landowners, and an increase of tourism due to the Country Music Festival held annually in January have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The Tamworth area has on average 270 bush fires per year, of which 18 can be considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition in the Tamworth area are:

- Lightning strikes
- Agricultural burns and practices
- Malicious fires
- Escaped pile burns
- Machinery and vehicle fires
- Welding, grinding and associated construction activities

Visiting crews may interact with local farm based fire units and land holders who may be undertaking local firefighting activities on theirs and neighbour's properties. They are a valuable source of local information, fire history and a resource. Land owners/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.

Due to the varied nature of the terrain in the Tamworth District, crews need to ensure they remain aware of local weather and wind conditions in the locations they are operating.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	177 Country Road, WESTDALE
District Office Phone:	02 5778 3600
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	145 TAMWTH A
B PSN Radio Channel:	245 TAMWTH B
PMR Channel:	2240 TAWTH P- Primary Dispatch Channel
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Northern Slopes
Local Government Area:	Tamworth

1.2. Topography

Topography varies across the district with elevations ranging between 250m to 1300m above sea level.

The Tamworth District borders and includes the Western slopes of the Great Dividing Range (in the East) and the Melville Range to the West (border with Liverpool Range DTZ).

The North and South also include hilly and mountainous terrain. As a result, the district has areas that are heavily timbered undulating to mountainous with escarpments and large areas with limited or no vehicle access.

The centre of the district opens to undulating farming land (grazing and crops) dispersed with areas of grassy woodlands, dry sclerophyll woodlands and forest.

There are several water catchments, rivers, and reservoirs in the Tamworth District.

1.3. Vegetation

The Eastern side of the district (North to South) includes the Western slopes of the Great Dividing Range. Vegetation is predominantly dry sclerophyll woodlands and forest with areas of grassy woodland and agriculture.

The centre of the district includes large areas of grassland and areas of intensive agriculture. Agriculture includes sheep, cattle, and cereal crop farming. Throughout this country are areas of grassy woodlands, dry sclerophyll woodlands and forest.

Areas North, West and South include hilly and mountainous country with a combination of grassy woodland, dry sclerophyll woodlands, forests and agricultural land. In the Southeast near Nundle are areas of plantation timber.

1.4. Climate

Most of the rain is summer predominant with average annual rainfall of 650mm or 26 inches. The area experiences low relative humidity and has average elevations of 400m above sea level for Tamworth and to the west towards Manilla and Barraba. To the north and east the land rises to the Northern Tablelands and the Great Divide with elevations of up to 1400m. These areas generally experience a shorter fire season. The bush fire season generally runs from October to March for the majority of the District.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Tamworth are usually north-westerly winds accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity. There are also frequent dry lightning storms occurring throughout the area during the bush fire season.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Tamworth 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)	25.7	28.5	30.8	33.0	31.7	29.4	25.4	20.7	17.1	16.5	18.6	22.1
Min Temp (°C)	9.7	13.3	15.6	17.7	16.9	14.5	10.0	5.9	3.6	2.3	2.8	5.8
Rainfall (mm)	57.5	84.4	79.2	61.4	71.5	64.2	25.4	29.4	53.4	40.4	38.7	44.9
3pm Temp (°C)	23.8	26.3	28.7	30.8	29.5	28.0	24.3	19.8	16.0	15.2	17.5	20.6
3pm wind (km/h)	17.5	17.9	16.7	16.8	16.3	15.8	15.1	14.3	14.2	14.8	16.9	17.3
3pm RH (%)	38	39	36	35	40	37	36	44	52	51	41	40

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- The area bounded by Gulf Creek Road, Bonnay Linton road to Warrabah Road, Avondale Road Macintyre Road
- Horton Falls Road and Cotswold Road area
- Between Nundle Road and Mulla Creek Road
- Areas south-east of Hanging Rock village

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Fire Trails

Fire trails in the hills to the Northwest, East and Southeast of Tamworth City are rated for Category 1, 7 & 9 vehicles. Many of the fire trails are dead ends or circular with one way in and out. Vehicle rating can change along the length of a fire trail (i.e., starts as Cat 1 ends as Cat 9).

1.7.2. Cereal Crops

Between November to December harvest is undertaken in agricultural land. 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.

1.7.3. Roads

Roads and trails in the hills are often steep and winding with significant drop offs to the side in some places. The West bound lanes of the New England Highway from Bendemeer to Moonbi have additional restrictions for trucks and emergency run off areas. Slow moving agricultural equipment is often encountered on roads.

1.7.4. Mobile Telephone/Radio Coverage

Mobile telephone and radio coverage in some areas of the zone is patchy due to terrain and distance. Crews need to be aware that they may at times be out of contact and may need to move to another location to send and received

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	2.39
Forestry Corporation of NSW	2.44
Crown Lands	5.27
Local Government	0.78
Private	86.61
All other	2.51

For more specific data on the Tamworth District, please follow the link to the Tamworth 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

