



RFS

District Information Pack

Far South Coast

Far South Coast Rural Fire District incorporates the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Local Government Areas. The District is approximately 280km from Sydney, 150km from Canberra and has a combined population of 73,862 (ABS 2020). The District covers a combined 970,900ha which includes the major population centres of Batemans Bay, Moruya, Narooma, Tuross, Bega, Merimbula and Eden.

The local economy is predominately primary industry (forestry, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture, and tourism). The tourism peak coincides with the summer months, where the area population can be more than double. Tourism is primarily concentrated in coastal towns but does involve recreation in forested areas.

The area experiences a major tourist influx during the fire danger period. This influx is primarily concentrated in coastal towns, but does include recreational activity in forested areas with increased fire risks. The unfamiliar territory and lack of fire knowledge amongst this transient population potentially impacts on the ability of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

Coastal towns are expanding faster than hinterland counterparts and expand either along the coast, by increased density or into surrounding rural or bushland areas. Where inland development has occurred it is usually rural residential, with forested areas adjacent. The population increase and demographic change can result in a less fire aware community.

The District is bushfire prone and of the average 60 bushfires per year, 4-5 can be considered significant. The main ignition sources include:

- Negligence/Accidental
- Arson
- Lightning
- Legal Burning (late Winter/Spring)
- Power Lines

There are two nominated Incident Management Facilities being the Eurobodalla Fire Control Centre (30 Campbell St, Moruya 2537) and the Bega Fire Control Centre (Maher St, Bega 2550)

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	30 campbell Street Moruya NSW 2536
District Office Phone:	02 4474 2855
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	113 FSC A
B PSN Radio Channel:	213 FSC B
PMR Channel:	2211 FSC NTH P & 2212 FSC STH P – Primary Dispatch Channels
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Far South Coast
Local Government Area:	Eurobodalla, Bega Valley

1.2. Topography

The District is predominately rural with vast areas of uninhabited, rugged forested areas through to open grassland/grazing areas. The District includes mountains and hills to the west which fall from 1100m above sea level to a narrow coastal lowland at or just above sea level where settlement and economic activity are concentrated. Approximately 68% of the District is managed by NPWS or Forests NSW.

The District climate is best considered as temperate with rainfall typically spread throughout the year. The summer period is typified by warm to hot conditions in areas mostly away from coastal influence. The geographical extent, particularly the spread from the north to south, can lead to a variety of weather conditions being experienced across the District.

1.3. Vegetation

Far South District predominately has a combination of grassland (pasture) and timbered areas. There are also pockets of pine plantations scattered to the west of the Eden area.

Grasslands typically begin to cure during the month of October and are fully cured by December (dependant of rainfall).

Variations in landscape, soils, aspects, and climate across the area have given rise to a considerable diversity of vegetation types including wet and dry sclerophyll, rainforest, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands.

1.4. Climate

The typical climate in the area is temperate and rainfall is not predominantly seasonal. The fire season generally commences on 1 September and continues until 31 March. Dry winter and spring seasons are not infrequent on the Far South Coast bringing an early start to the fire season. This can be followed by rain in February/March which tends to bring an end to the worst of the bushfire danger. Spring rains can also be followed by rapid drying of pastures and bush, in the summer months.

On occasion the area is subject to very high temperatures and low humidity. Such conditions can last for days in succession. During the bushfire danger period we can expect numerous dry lightning storms with minimal rainfall.

Very strong and dry hot winds are often experienced in the area. Winds of concern are from the north west and west. Southerly changes following hot westerly winds have also been a problem. Coastal areas are also subject to the influence of a north east sea breeze but this is usually associated with higher humidity.

Prolonged drought conditions are another climatic factor affecting the Shire. The central and northern areas of the Shire can be much drier than the Southern areas at times. The terrain extends from the coast to the mountainous escarpment with elevations over 1100m resulting in a variety of weather conditions across the landscape that can be difficult to forecast. All the coastal towns abut onto the coastal range.

The onset of low rainfall may be predicted from analysis of the trends of the Southern Oscillation Index and bush fire behaviour can correlate to a degree with these times particularly in the escarpment areas.

Extreme fire seasons are determined largely by the incidence of strong, hot, westerly wind blowing from the centre of the continent during drought conditions.

The combination of weather conditions with topography, access, forest type and fuel loads make the South Coast, particularly susceptible to severe bush fire seasons. Most of the Eurobodalla Shire has been burnt by high intensity bush fires.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Catalina Country Club Batemans Bay recorded by the BoM (last updated 4 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	21.8	23.0	24.4	25.9	25.6	24.4	22.2	19.6	17.4	16.9	18.2	20.2
Min Temp (°C)	9.7	12.3	14.1	15.7	16.0	14.0	10.6	7.1	5.1	3.6	4.6	7.4
Rainfall (mm)	86.4	93.1	74.7	85.5	100.3	84.4	60.8	52.2	74.2	42.9	62.1	53.1
3pm Temp (°C)	20.1	21.1	22.9	24.2	24.2	23.1	20.9	18.4	16.2	15.6	16.8	18.8
3pm wind (km/h)	14.1	13.6	12.5	13.1	11.7	10.0	9.2	6.9	7.2	8.4	12.5	13.9
3pm RH (%)	58	61	62	63	66	63	62	61	61	57	56	57

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Narooma (Marine Rescue) recorded by the BoM (last updated 4 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	19.7	20.8	22.1	23.8	23.7	22.9	21.2	19.0	16.8	16.3	17.0	18.5
Min Temp (°C)	11.4	13.4	15.2	16.8	16.8	15.5	13.1	10.3	8.0	6.8	7.4	9.2
Rainfall (mm)	75.5	75.8	74.6	91.1	91.7	108.5	81.6	75.1	86.9	50.1	50.7	58.0
3pm Temp (°C)	17.3	18.7	20.3	21.9	22.2	21.2	19.6	17.6	15.6	15.1	15.5	16.6
3pm wind (km/h)	15.6	16.1	15.5	15.1	14.5	14.1	12.5	11.5	11.7	11.9	13.1	15.3
3pm RH (%)	70	72	73	74	74	71	68	65	62	60	58	63

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Bega AWS recorded by the BoM (last updated 11 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	22.1	23.6	25.0	27.2	26.5	24.9	22.4	22.4	19.4	16.8	16.6	18.0
Min Temp (°C)	8.6	11.4	13.5	15.2	15.0	12.9	9.5	5.7	3.6	2.3	3.2	6.1
Rainfall (mm)	55.4	69.8	69.7	54.9	82.5	76.4	36.0	54.0	60.2	40.5	33.9	36.5
3pm Temp (°C)	19.1	21.1	22.7	24.9	24.7	22.9	20.3	17.7	15.4	15.0	16.2	17.7
3pm wind (km/h)	21.6	21.7	21.8	22.2	20.5	19.2	17.4	14.9	14.1	15.3	19.0	20.8
3pm RH (%)	57	60	60	60	60	59	59	59	58	54	51	53

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Merimbula Airport AWS recorded by the BoM (last updated 11 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	20.7	21.8	23.3	24.8	24.8	23.7	21.7	19.2	26.9	26.7	17.4	19.4
Min Temp (°C)	9.2	11.8	13.8	15.5	15.3	13.8	11.0	7.6	5.6	4.2	4.8	6.9
Rainfall (mm)	64.9	81.0	72.2	66.8	82.5	90.5	62.9	57.6	65.7	46.7	43.4	41.8
3pm Temp (°C)	17.9	19.4	21.2	22.8	22.9	22.0	19.9	17.4	15.4	14.9	15.7	17.2
3pm wind (km/h)	18.0	19.4	21.2	22.8	22.9	22.0	19.9	17.4	15.4	14.9	15.7	17.2
3pm RH (%)	61	65	63	65	64	62	61	60	60	58	55	58

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- The Far South Coast District has a very good system working along ridge tops, once travel commences down into the valleys reception can become quite patchy away from the coastal fringe of the district.
- Area around New Buildings between Rocky Hall and Burragate.
- North of Rocky Hall along the Big Jack Mountain Road. Also top of Mt Darragh Rd east of Cathcart.
- Parts of the Snake Track along the lower altitude track sections down near Towamba River.
- West of Genoa and south of Broadaxe Rd can be patchy - need to chase the high ground in some parts.
- Along the Kings highway going up the Clyde mountain at Currawan and near western distributed road.

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. General

- African Love Grass. Is an infestation of African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis Curvula*), and is currently having a significant impact on the Bega Valley.
- Large parts of Western Ranges are inaccessible due to the terrain.
- The Snowy Mountains Highway transits down the Brown Mountain towards Bega and the Kings Highway down the Clyde Mountain towards Batemans Bay.
- Both of these mountains are prone to land slippages and motor vehicle accidents.
- The population increases significantly during the summer months/holiday season.
- There are many camping areas within the Far South Coast and this can become an issue when attempting warn people of impending fire incidents.

1.7.2. Transportation

The South Eastern Area has an extensive road network. The M1 Princess Highway connects Sydney to the South Coast, Batemans Bay and beyond to the Far South Coast extent of the Area and the Victorian Border. The highway follows the coastline for most of its length.

The Kings Highway is a State highway located within Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales. The highway connects Canberra with Batemans Bay on the South Coast. The Kings Highway links the Princes Highway to Canberra.

1.7.3. Aviation

Aerodromes at Moruya and Merimbula have limited commercial flights (daily).

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Eurobodalla

Land Manager	% of area
National Parks and Wildlife Service	41.07%
Forests NSW	30.9%
Local Government	0.98%
Crown Land	5.26 %
All Other	21.79%

Bega

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	40%
Forests NSW	25%
Department of Lands	0.3%
Local Government	3.5%
Commonwealth	<0.01%
Private	22%
All Other	9%

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

Note: These links will only work with internet coverage.

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

