



# RFS

## District Information Pack

### Lower North Coast

Lower North Coast Zone is situated on the Mid North Coast of NSW, approximately 40 km south of Coffs Harbour and 30km North of Port Macquarie. The Zone incorporates the Local Government Areas of Kempsey Shire Council and Nambucca Valley Council (Population: 52,227).

The Lower North Coast covers 523,000ha (5,230sq km), containing four (4) main population centres (Macksville, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey & South West Rocks) with smaller coastal and rural villages. High tourism levels are experienced in all coastal towns and villages during the September/October school holidays and the Christmas/ New Year holiday period.

The Lower North Coast area has on average 365 bush fires per year, of which five (5) % on average can be classified as significant fires. Fire records indicate that the majority of wildfires (73%) have resulted from escaped hazard reduction or agricultural burning carried out on private property during the Bush Fire Danger Period.

The nominated Incident Management Facility is the Lower North Coast Fire Control Centre (Cnr North and River Streets, West Kempsey NSW 2440), with two local Emergency Operations Centres identified here: Kempsey Emergency Operations Centre (Kempsey Police Station: 5 Elbow St, West Kempsey NSW 2440) and the Nambucca Emergency Operations Centre (Kelly Close, Macksville NSW 2447).

### 1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	North Street Kempsey NSW 2440
District Office Phone:	02 6563 7100
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	120 LNC A
B PSN Radio Channel:	220 LLN B
PMR Channel:	2217 LNC P - Primary Dispatch Channel
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	North Coast
Local Government Area:	Kempsey, Nambucca Valley

## 1.2. Topography

The area predominantly consists of undulating terrain with steep forested areas to the west of the main towns of Kempsey and Macksville. To the east it predominantly consists of coastal flat land which is primarily used for grazing, mixed with vegetation heath along the coastal strip. Vegetation on higher elevations tends to be dry sclerophyll with wet sclerophyll and patches of rainforest in gullies. In the north and central eastern parts of both LGA's there are significant areas of mixed farming which include, but not limited to macadamias, avocados and stone fruit.

## 1.3. Vegetation

The eastern coastline of Kempsey Shire has a significant amount of low lying swampland. These areas experience periodic inundation with some tidal influence and are characterised by large expanses of forested wetlands. Adjoining these to the east are typically flat to undulating areas of coastal heath surrounding small coastal villages.

The Lower North Coast Zone area rises from sea level at the coast through to elevations of around 1400 metres towards the west within the New England National Park which border on the edge of the NSW New England Tablelands.

There is approximately 171,200ha (1,712sq km) of Forest and National Parks tenures across the Lower North Coast Zone area.

## 1.4. Climate

The typical / average climate in the Lower North Coast area is predominantly temperate maritime with a late summer, early autumn peak rainfall (January to March). The bush fire season generally runs from September to February, but often commences mid to late July with Bushfire Danger periods being introduced as early as August.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season are generally dry west to north westerly winds which occur in spring through to early summer producing short periods of severe to extreme fire conditions. These winds are associated with deep cyclonic depressions off the NSW north coast and can produce winds in excess of 100kph along the coastal strip. There are also frequent dry lightning storms that occur during the bushfire season.

## 1.5. Average Weather Data

**Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Kempsey Airport AWS (last updated 25 July 2024) recorded by the BoM**

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	25.7	26.9	28.4	29.5	28.9	27.4	25.3	22.5	20.2	20.1	21.8	24.4
Min Temp (°C)	11.3	14.3	16.2	18.0	18.0	16.7	13.1	8.7	6.6	5.0	5.2	8.1
Rainfall (mm)	84.9	102.7	106.6	117.9	148.8	202.0	75.6	58.9	94.7	37.6	45.1	43.1
3pm Temp (°C)	23.1	24.6	26.3	27.6	27.0	25.7	23.3	20.8	18.9	18.5	19.9	22.0
3pm wind (km/h)	20.9	20.9	20.0	20.1	18.6	17.2	14.7	12.9	12.9	14.1	17.0	19.7
3pm RH (%)	53	59	57	58	60	62	59	54	54	48	44	48

## 1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

There are no significant radio blackspots within the Lower North Coast. There are some small pockets of poor coverage, but in general coverage is reasonably good using both PMR and GRN networks. These networks are currently linked so if there is a blackspot on one, there will most likely be coverage on the other.

## 1.7. Hazards

### 1.7.1. Transportation

Main North-South Railway Line (75km) – Sydney to Brisbane. The Pacific Highway (M1) is the main transportation route running in a north south direction on the eastern side of the area. The M1 has heavy traffic, 24 hours a day, with night time traffic consisting mainly of semi-trailers transporting various loads between Sydney and Brisbane. The highway also carries the majority of holiday transport between the two major cities. Closure of the Pacific Highway, at any time, is estimated to cost in excess of 1 million dollars per hour.

### 1.7.2. Special Fire Protection Purpose

There are two (2) hospitals located within the Lower North Coast Zone (Kempsey and Macksville), as well as a number of aged care facilities primarily situated in the main localities. There are also various Special Fire Protection Facilities identified in the Lower North Coast Bushfire Risk Management Plan which can be located on the NSWRFs website.

### 1.7.3. Energy/Water

There are various electricity substations and high voltage infrastructure situated throughout Lower North Coast Zone. Essential Energy are the organisation responsible for maintenance of the network.

#### 1.7.4. Catchment Areas

There are two primary river systems located within the Zone, consisting of the Macleay River (Kempsey) and the Nambucca River (Macksville / Nambucca). The Macleay catchment is on the New South Wales (NSW) Mid-North coast. The catchment of 11,450 square kilometres includes extensive areas of the Northern Tablelands, a sparsely populated escarpment area and a coastal area ranging from foothills to coastal plains. From the gently rolling hills of the tablelands, the central catchment is mountainous with deep gorges. The lower catchment comprises wide floodplains extending to the coast and includes Kempsey and South West Rocks.

Nambucca River catchment area is approximately 129900ha (1,299sq km) and rises below Killiekrankie Mountain on the Dorrigo Plateau, part of the Great Dividing Range. The Nambucca River catchment flows generally east southeast, joined by four tributaries including Taylors Arm, before reaching its mouth at the Tasman Sea of the South Pacific Ocean, at Nambucca Heads. The river descends 594 metres (1,949 feet) over its 87 kilometres course adjacent to the towns of Bowraville, Macksville and Nambucca Heads.

### 1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	26
Department of Lands	11.64
Forestry Corporation of NSW	4.85
Local Government & Private	57.51

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

*Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.*

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For further information regarding the Lower North Coast District Information pack, please contact the Operational Improvement team via email at **[operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au)**

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