



RFS

District Information Pack

Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA)

The MIA District is located in the Riverina region in Southern NSW. It is predominantly farming land consisting of flat to undulating terrain with hilly forested areas and river flats along the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers. At the last census, there was an approximate population of 52163. The major population centres are Griffith, Hay, Leeton, and Narrandera, with smaller towns being Barellan, Booligal, Carrathool, Coleambally, Darlington Point, Goolgowi, Grong Grong, Hanwood, Hillston, Lake Wyangan, Maude, Merriwagga, Murrumbidgee, Nerricon, Rankins Springs, Whitton, Yanco and Yenda.

Local industry is largely agricultural and consists mainly of crop and sheep farming to the east and west with irrigated farming, rice, citrus fruit, cotton and grapes through the centre. There are several wineries, feedlots and large Industrial estates in the District. Other industries in the towns and villages within the MIA service the farming industry and tourist industry.

Large numbers of backpackers and temporary/seasonal farm labour, a relatively aged population in some areas, absentee landowners, residents with a non English speaking background, and popular camping areas along the Murrumbidgee River have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The MIA District has on average 495 bush fires per year, of which 10 on average can be considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition are:

- Natural causes, including lightning
- Escapes from agricultural burns

There are 21 National Parks covering an area of 169181 ha and 19 State Forests covering an area of 21484 hectares.

The Bush Fire Danger Period commences 1 October running through to 31 March. These dates may be varied according to seasonal conditions.

The Fire Control Centre (FCC) is located in Griffith, and the Local Emergency Operation Centre for major incidents is located at the Griffith FCC.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	200 Wakaden Street Griffith NSW 2680
District Office Phone:	02 6966 7800
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	128 MIA A – check with District if in use
B PSN Radio Channel:	228 MIA B – check with District if in use
PMR Channel:	2223 MIA EST P & 2224 MIA WST P– Primary Dispatch Channels
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	South Western
Local Government Area:	Carrathool, Griffith, Hay, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera

***At the time of publication, A & B Channels were not in use – check with the District if required**

1.2. Topography

It is predominantly farming land consisting of flat to undulating terrain with hilly forested areas and river flats along the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers.

1.3. Vegetation

A number of vegetation types exist within the MIA District, such as Western Slopes Dry Sclerophyll Forest, Riverina Plain Grassland, Western Slopes Grassy Woodland, Riverina Plain Woodlands and Floodplain Transitions Woodland.

Good spring rains can cause the grass to grow and significantly increase the grass fire hazard. During October the grass fuels begin to cure, and by November if the weather is hot, is fully cured.

The National Park along the Murrumbidgee River and throughout the District are popular with campers and anglers. Unattended camp fires present a risk particularly during the summer months, which can cause a severe bushfire to occur within these areas.

All vegetation types will support a major bush fire if conditions are favourable.

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1.4. Climate

The area generally experiences hot dry summers, with low rainfall. Spring rainfall is the primary determining factor with regard to grass fire fuel loads. Typical conditions favour a flush of green fuel growth in spring, which undergoes curing by early summer. This curing normally results in a rapid increase in the fire danger by December.

Typical days of extreme fire danger occur with periods of dry north westerly winds, bringing maximum temperatures to the vicinity of 43o. These days usually occur around January and February.

1.5. Average Weather Data

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

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	24.3	28.2	31.1	33.3	32.4	29.0	24.1	19.2	15.5	14.8	16.6	20.2
Min Temp (°C)	9.2	12.8	15.3	17.4	17.5	14.4	10.3	6.7	4.3	3.4	3.8	5.8
Rainfall (mm)	40.4	36.4	32.9	36.8	28.0	35.4	29.6	36.1	35.1	32.6	35.0	32.9
3pm Temp (°C)	22.8	26.0	28.6	30.6	30.2	27.0	22.8	18.2	14.3	13.3	15.5	18.9
3pm wind (km/h)	19.5	19.6	19.1	17.8	17.2	15.9	15.6	14.7	15.8	16.0	19.0	19.8
3pm RH (%)	37	35	31	28	34	37	41	53	63	62	54	47

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

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	25.9	29.4	32.1	34.8	33.3	29.9	24.6	19.6	15.9	15.9	17.6	21.9
Min Temp (°C)	9.7	13.5	15.6	18.1	17.1	14.6	9.9	6.3	4.0	3.3	4.1	6.3
Rainfall (mm)	32.0	47.7	33.9	33.0	31.0	29.6	28.3	31.9	25.5	21.7	24.4	24.6
3pm Temp (°C)	Data not available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

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

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	24.5	28.1	31.2	33.3	32.2	28.8	23.8	18.9	15.1	14.5	16.2	20.2
Min Temp (°C)	9.2	12.6	15.1	17.6	17.2	14.2	9.6	6.3	3.9	3.2	3.7	5.7
Rainfall (mm)	41.0	38.5	36.4	40.5	33.5	34.5	35.2	39.3	38.6	35.8	38.8	25.2
3pm Temp (°C)	No data available											
3pm wind (km/h)												
3pm RH (%)												

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

Nil reported

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Human Settlement

Carrathool Shire

The town of Hillston has a commercial and industrial area; including a hospital, 2 Primary Schools, a High School, 2 x Fuel Depots, Cotton Gin, bulk grain facility, bulk agriculture chemical storage and retirement/aged care facility.

The towns within the Shire, Goolgowi, Merriwagga, Rankins Springs and Tabbita all have bulk grain storage facility and bulk agriculture chemical storage.

The towns within the Shire, Carrathool, Goolgowi, Merriwagga and Rankins Springs all have a Primary School.

Griffith City

The city of Griffith has significant commercial and industrial areas, 2 hospitals, 4 High Schools and a TAFE college as well as several aged care facilities.

There are hotels, motels, and backpacker accommodation.

There are 12 primary schools.

Other significant structural assets include an airport, railway station (passenger and freight), several large wineries, poultry sheds, and a chicken poultry plant, citrus juice processing plants, Liquid Petroleum Gas depot, cold storage and various other industries within the Griffith LGA. Tharbogang and Yenda both have multiple bulk grain storage facilities.

Hay Shire

The town of Hay has a commercial and industrial area; including a hospital and 1 high school and 2 primary schools and a retirement/aged care facility.

Hay Shire is well known for its Merino sheep and wool industry as well as producing a diverse range of commercial crops such as rice, corn, cotton and wheat. Irrigated horticultural land produces lettuce, rockmelon, broccoli, grapes and garlic. Auscot cotton gin is located 8km south of Hay on the Cobb Hwy.

Leeton Shire

The town of Leeton have commercial and industrial areas including a hospital, Primary Schools, 4 High Schools, a TAFE college and a railway station and retirement/aged care complexes.

1/19 Royal New South Wales Regiment has a Platoon based in Leeton as well as an Army Cadet Unit. Yanco has a bulk grain storage facility. Whitton has a Cotton Gin storage facility. Yanco Agricultural High School and Yanco Ag Institute (DPI) have accommodation blocks.

Other industries within the Shire include a rice mill, juice factory, feedlot, cereal processing factory and fertilizer factory.

Various recreation and camping points are located in Leeton along the Murrumbidgee River both in National Parks and private establishments.

There is a Weir located at Gogeldrie on the Murrumbidgee River.

Murrumbidgee Shire

Agriculture and the processing of agricultural products especially rice are key industries in Murrumbidgee Shire. Row cropping using the "raised bed" furrow irrigation system to produce crops such as maize, sweet corn, faba and soybeans, also make up a prominent part of the local agricultural industry.

Substantial quantities of fruit, such as almonds and sugarplums, which are processed in the Shire, are also grown. Coleambally has bulk grain storage facility and an Ethanol Plant and various other industries such as solar farms in the Murrumbidgee area.

Narrandera Shire

The town of Narrandera have commercial and industrial areas including a hospital, high school and primary schools, a TAFE college and a railway station and retirement/aged care complexes. Located 5km west of Narrandera is the Narrandera Airport.

Narrandera and Grong Grong both have bulk grain storage facility.

Most towns within the District have some light industry, hotels and motels, service stations, nursing homes day care, play groups and pre-schools. The farming localities have a small group of residences and farms with sheds, fuel storage, hay stacks and machinery.

1.7.2. Utilities

A Natural Gas pipeline runs through the towns of Narrandera, Leeton and Griffith.

1.7.3. Transport

Within the MIA District there are 5 major arterial Highways. These are the Newell Highway the Sturt Highway, the Kidman Way, the Mid Western Highway and the Cobb Highway. These Highways have a moderate traffic flow 24hrs a day increasing during the holiday periods. At night the traffic consists mainly of semi-trailers. Transport companies both locally and inter-state, move various types of loads throughout the district. These Highways often have caravans and weekend tourists during the holiday periods.

The main roads in the District have light daily traffic of heavy to medium trucks carrying mixed loads to service the towns of the area. School Busses transport children to and from school on a daily basis and utilise the Highways and other roads within the District.

Agriculture machinery moves along the roads within the District going from property to property and may travel some distance. This machinery usually has an escort. During harvest time, cotton, grain, grapes, rice and wheat are transported along roads within the District.

The main rail line runs through the locality of Roto in the Carrathool Shire. This line consists of one train line. Trains that utilise this line are the Indian Pacific and other freight trains. Along this line are sidings for trains to pass each other. Other train lines run through the towns of Hillston, Griffith, Yanco and Narrandera. This train line is used primarily for freight. During harvest and immediately after harvest extra trains carrying grain travel to and from silos. A large rail freight terminal resides in the Leeton Shire on the Irrigation Way located at Widgelli.

1.7.4. Aviation

Carrathool Shire (Hillston), Griffith City, Hay Shire, Narrandera Shire have fully equipped airports, with bulk fuel facilities and aircraft hangers. Griffith City and Narrandera Shire both have a domestic passenger service with terminals.

Aircraft are also used for spraying within the district.

1.7.5. Vegetation Hazards

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1.7.6. Special Hazards

Airports at Narrandera and Griffith, Airstrips at Hay and Hillston, Fuel depots, Electrical sub stations and grain silos, wineries, fertilizer depots, cattle feedlots, piggeries, fisheries, research stations, a CSIRO and DPI complex, National Parks and State Forests.

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	2.1
Forestry Corporation NSW	1.9
Department of Lands	12.7
Local Government	0.5
Other	82.8

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

