



RFS

District Information Pack

Mid Lachlan Valley

Government Areas of Forbes, Lachlan, Parkes and Weddin.

The population of the Mid Lachlan Valley area is approximately 29,000 people. The major population centres are Forbes, Condobolin, Parkes and Grenfell. Smaller towns and rural villages include Lake Cargelligo, Tullibigeal, Weja, Burcher, Fifield, Albert, Tottenham, Tullamore, Trundle, Bogan Gate, Bedgerabong, Corinella, Wirrinya, Garema, Caragabal, Quandialla, Bimbi, Bumbaldry, Greenethorpe, Cookamidgera, Alectown and Peak Hill. There is also a rural subdivision at Alcheringa.

A high number of property owners travelling out of the area to work, large areas with a relatively low population due to property buy outs, increasing numbers of lifestyle blocks being created on the edge of towns and a large portion of occupants of these properties who are absent during working hours have been identified as potentially impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

The Mid Lachlan Valley area has on average 200 bush fires per year, of which one on average can be considered to be a major fire. The main sources of ignition in the Mid Lachlan Valley area are:

- Lightning storm activity – most common cause of fire across the area
- Farm machinery, slashing/cutting operations and harvest operations
- Vehicle accidents and exhausts coming in contact with vegetation along major roads, particularly along the Newell Highway
- Power lines clashing and equipment failure
- Incidents associated with storage of hay, including spontaneous combustion
- Careless acts by individuals, particularly welding and grinding during adverse fire weather

Fires are predominantly grass/crop fires. Most of these fires are contained reasonably quickly, although with unfavourable weather conditions the loss of fencing, stock and outbuildings is a concern.

Every five to ten years a major fire occurs in the eastern range, usually from a lightning strike. Such an event tends to coincide with drought periods due to drier fuels and dry electrical fronts. Major fires have occurred in the National Park areas, Vacant Crown Land, on private property, in the steep hills throughout the area and the ranges in the east. These fires have the potential to escape into adjoining fire districts.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	26 Union Street Forbes NSW 2871
District Office Phone:	02 6852 5600
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	126 MDLCH A – Primary Dispatch Channel
B PSN Radio Channel:	226 MDLCH B
PMR Channel:	2222 MDLCH P
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Lower Central West Plains
Local Government Area:	Lachlan, Parkes, Forbes, Weddin

1.2. Topography

The area is significantly rural with 4 major rural towns. Much of the land is open, relatively flat / sloping and interspersed, localised state forests and small range areas, especially in Weddin LGA. Mountain ranges within the Goobang and Weddin Mountain National Parks run north-south along the eastern District boundary

There are several main highways across the area, with numerous back roads (many unsealed and some only about 1.5 cars wide in spots). Many roads are subject to closure when the Lachlan River, Bogan River and allied tributaries are in flood.

1.3. Vegetation

The Mid Lachlan Valley Team has a combination of pastures (cereal, cropping, hay production and oil seeds) and timbered areas throughout. There are also pockets of native pine forests scattered throughout the District. The Black Pines are volatile when exposed to ignition / fire.

Grasslands typically begin to cure during the month of November and are fully cured by January. Fuel loads in grassland areas are subject to variation based upon grazing levels and rainfall received during winter/spring and the previous season.

Surface fuels in timbered areas average around 10-15 t/ha with mainly surface and near- surface fuel.

1.4. Climate

The typical / average climate in the Mid Lachlan Valley area generally consists of hot dry summers, with dry lightning storms frequently occurring during the bush fire season. Winters are normally cool to cold with moist south to southwest winds. The bush fire season generally runs from October to March.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with bush fires in the Mid Lachlan area consists of very high daytime temperatures, strong north to north westerly winds and very low humidity.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Forbes 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)	25.0	28.8	31.8	34.3	32.7	29.4	24.6	19.4	15.4	14.7	16.5	20.5
Min Temp (°C)	8.8	12.7	15.3	18.2	17.4	14.5	9.5	5.6	3.7	2.7	2.9	5.2
Rainfall (mm)	45.0	53.0	52.0	41.3	49.0	54.1	32.1	35.1	51.3	40.4	36.1	42.0
3pm Temp (°C)	23.2	27.3	29.9	32.3	30.9	27.9	23.5	19.7	14.7	13.7	15.4	19.4
3pm wind (km/h)	19.6	19.8	20.0	18.4	17.4	16.8	15.7	15.2	16.2	16.2	18.0	19.1
3pm RH (%)	36	29	24	25	31	31	36	46	61	60	51	45

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Grenfell (Manganese Road) recorded by the BoM (last updated 24 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	22.7	26.6	29.9	31.8	30.9	27.9	22.7	17.7	13.8	13.0	14.8	18.5
Min Temp (°C)	8.8	11.8	14.4	16.4	16.1	13.4	9.3	6.1	4.0	3.1	3.9	6.0
Rainfall (mm)	54.5	52.0	55.2	53.3	47.7	50.1	47.2	49.2	58.6	56.0	55.4	50.3
3pm Temp (°C)	21.2	25.3	28.4	30.5	29.6	26.9	22.0	17.5	13.5	12.4	14.1	17.3
3pm wind (km/h)	21.2	25.3	18.4	30.5	29.6	26.9	22.0	17.5	13.5	12.4	14.1	17.3
3pm RH (%)	41	36	32	32	36	37	43	53	64	64	56	51

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Around the Goobang National Park there are GRN Blackspots, but there is PMR coverage to address the issues.
- There are areas of low signal strength through the area.
- There is shadowing around some areas but they are at elevation and have not been identified as issues.
- Signal Strength is forecast to increase once the PSN sites under construction are brought online.
- The Road between Ungarie and Lake Cargelligo continues to have low Hand Held reception

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation

MVAs regularly occur around Marsden, but can happen anywhere, including remote rural roads. The Inland Rail line runs north-south through the Mid Lachlan Valley from Peak Hill to Bribbaree.

Significant roadways include:

- Newell Highway: running roughly north-south from Peak Hill down to Marsden
- Lachlan Valley Way: running east-west from Cowra to Lake Cargelligo
- Mid-Western Highway: running east-west from Cowra to Marsden where it meets the Newell Highway.

Other major roads running across district:

- Nymagee – Condobolin Rd
- Bogan Gate – Tottenham Rd
- Henry Lawson Way (Forbes to Grenfell, then to Young)

1.7.2. Special Assets

- Parkes Radio Telescope.
- Camping areas within National Park areas.
- Solar farms located in Jemalong, Trundle, Peak Hill and two sites west of Parkes.
- Copper and gold mining operations are located at Mineral Hill, North Parkes and Fifield.
- Gas pumping station and gas pipe line located south of Condobolin

1.7.3. Agriculture

- Crop / stubble fires are common across the area from November to January and often arise from machinery causing sparks in dry fuel
- Various types of farm machinery are subject to loss from fire throughout the year
- Hay stack / shed fires can occur at any time during the year

1.7.4. Aviation

There are small commercial airstrips at Forbes, Parkes, Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo and Tottenham. Parkes has regular scheduled flights to Sydney. Aviation related fuels are present at these sites.

There are also rural / private strips on about 1/3 of farms.

1.7.5. Key Community Assets

Hospitals are located at all major towns and villages. As are retirement villages and education facilities.

1.8. land management authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
Forestry Corporation of NSW	1.7
National Parks and Wildlife	1.41
Local Government	0.83
Private	92.93
Department of Lands	1.57
Rail Services	0.08
Local Land Services	1.26
North Parkes Mine	0.22

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

