



District Information Pack

Mid Murray

The Mid Murray Zone is located in the Southern Riverina, New South Wales about 700 km south west of Sydney, covering 24,091sq km of land. The population of the Mid Murray area is approximately 24,500 with the main population centre being Deniliquin. The other significant population centres include Barham, Jerilderie, Mathoura, Moama, Moulamein, Tooleybuc and Wakool.

The area experiences seasonal population changes, with high tourist numbers in forest areas throughout the year, particularly long weekends and school holidays. During Easter and Christmas, sites near Deniliquin and Moulamein experience a surge in population due to the Down to Earth Festival, which have limited access. These issues have been identified as potential impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire.

Potential major risk seasons follow significant periods of high growth from high winter rainfall. These seasons allow the build-up of fine fuels which creates the potential for a major season across the whole of the area once cured.

The Mid Murray has on average 300 incidents per year. Major fires do not occur frequently, usually less than one per year. The main sources of ignition include:

- lightning
- equipment and machinery
- vehicles,
- unattended camp fires
- power lines

The nominated Incident Management Facility is the Mid Murray Fire Control Centre. This is also the location of the primary local Emergency Operations Centre.

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	Macknight Drive Deniliquin NSW
District Office Phone:	03 5898 4100
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	Not yet activated
B PSN Radio Channel:	Not yet activated
PMR Channel:	2225 MMZ CEN P, 2226 MMZ EST P & 2227 MMZ WST P – Primary Dispatch Channels
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Southern Riverina
Local Government Area:	Edward River, Murray River, southern portion of the Murrumbidgee

1.2. Topography

The Mid Murray Zone is flat riverine country with numerous creeks and rivers and an extensive irrigation channel network. The Murray River marks the entire southern boundary of the zone and the Edward and Wakool Rivers traverse east west through the middle of the zone. The Billabong Creek also traverses the zone east west in the northern area of the zone.

Large red gum State Forests and National Parks (total 170,000 ha) are located mostly in the southern area of the zone along the Murray River.

Mid Murray also consists of very large areas of grasslands grazing sheep and cattle. There are also large areas of dryland cropping.

The zone also has a significant area of irrigated cropping with rice covering up to 60,000 ha every summer. Other industries supported by irrigation include dairy, fruit, grapes and almonds. The irrigation system is supported by some 2,000 km earthen irrigation channels.

1.3. Vegetation

The vegetation is largely flat grassland with large areas of dry land and irrigated cropping.

Timbered areas are predominately the red gum forest in the south with numerous other parks and state forests located throughout the zone. Sandy areas in the north have large stands of native pine.

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

Grassland fuel levels vary between three and four tonnes per hectare in average to good seasons.

1.4. Climate

The typical average climate in the Mid Murray area is warm temperate, with predominantly winter rainfall. The bush fire season generally runs from October/November through to March/April, depending on season conditions. Fire weather conditions are usually associated with winds from the West around to the North, accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity. Dry lightning storms occur frequently during the bush fire season, often starting forest and grass fires.

Rainfall in the area is spread across the year, and peaking in late winter and early spring. Annual variations to rainfall can be extreme, producing either droughts or floods.

Weather extremes occur in summer, with temperatures up to 45°C, low humidity which can fall to 5%, and strong winds in excess of 60kph, which have combined with disastrous results.

In winter, temperatures at and below zero are not uncommon, with regular frosts.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Deniliquin 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)	23.7	27.8	30.6	33.3	32.1	28.7	23.5	18.5	15.0	14.4	16.2	20.0
Min Temp (°C)	8.5	12.0	14.3	16.7	16.1	13.5	9.5	6.1	4.2	3.3	4.0	6.0
Rainfall (mm)	41.8	48.8	29.9	25.5	25.9	25.3	27.8	27.8	30.5	27.9	33.3	33.6
3pm Temp (°C)	21.9	26.2	28.2	31.2	30.1	27.2	22.6	17.8	14.4	13.5	15.4	18.7
3pm wind (km/h)	21.3	20.3	21.1	20.5	19.2	18.4	17.4	17.7	17.9	18.6	20.3	21.3
3pm RH (%)	33	29	25	22	27	29	37	49	61	60	51	44

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

Some minor issues reported along some creeks and rivers but nothing extensive

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation

Major roads include The Newell Highway (A39 - Finley to Narrandera) in the east and Cobb Highway (B75 - Moama to Hay) in the centre, run north south through the Mid Murray.

The Sturt Highway (A20 - Balranald to Hay) runs east west in the north western area of the Mid Murray.

Other key roads include the Kidman Way (B87 - Jerilderie to Darlington Point), the Riverina Highway (B58 - Deniliquin to Finley), Pretty Pine Road (Deniliquin to Moulamein) and the Yanga Way (B12 - Tooleybuc to Balranald).

These roads are all used for Interstate, B Double and Road Train traffic.

A rail line runs from Moama in the south to Deniliquin. This line is used almost solely for the transport of rice from the Deniliquin rice mill. Unused lines run from Moama to Moulamein and from Finley through Jerilderie to Narrandera.

1.7.2. Agriculture

Traditional agricultural operations are present throughout (livestock and cropping) with a significant presence of trucks and farm machinery on the roads. Crop harvest occurs twice each year with traditional cereal crops harvested November to December and rice harvest March to April.

1.7.3. Aviation

The Deniliquin Airport, Macknight Drive Deniliquin is a small commercial and recreational airport. Field Air aerial agricultural business is located at the airport. There is also an aircraft repair business and numerous private planes located at the airport. The Mid Murray Zone has an airbase located here. Average aircraft movements are about 2150 annually.

There is also an airstrip located at Jerilderie and a number of rural airstrips in the Mid Murray area. There are a number of other airstrips at nearby towns just outside the Mid Murray area.

1.7.4. Special Fire Protection Facilities

There are three hospitals located in the area at Barham, Deniliquin and Jerilderie. Only the Jerilderie Hospital is directly exposed to grass/bush fire.

There are age care facilities located at Deniliquin, Moama and Moulamein. None are directly exposed to grass/bush fire.

There are three high schools in the Mid Murray area, along with 16 primary schools. The Blighty, Conargo, Mayrung and Wakool primary schools are small remote schools that are exposed to grass/bush fires. Primary schools in Jerilderie and Moama are potentially exposed to grass/bush fire.

There is also a TAFE in Deniliquin and a number of child care facilities across the area, none are directly exposed to grass/bush fires.

1.7.5. Energy and Water

There are a number of electrical sub stations located across the area along with various high voltage power lines. Essential Energy is responsible for maintenance of the power network. There are also some significant solar power sites in the area.

The main river and water supply for the area is the Murray River and tributaries the Edward and Wakool Rivers. The Billabong Creek is fed from the Murrumbidgee River and also provides water to a significant area in the north of the Mid Murray. The Mulwala Canal runs from Lake Mulwala on the Murray River at Yarrawonga and supplies water to a large part of the area for irrigation, stock and domestic use.

1.8. land management authorities

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	1
Forestry Corporation NSW	4
Department of Lands	10
Local Government	10
Private	74
Other	1

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

Note: This link will only work with internet coverage.

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

