



FIRE EMERGENCY

NEW ZEALAND

TASMANIA DEPLOYMENT UPDATE #4



The third deployment departs for Tasmania

Another 20 arduous firefighters departed New Zealand on 6 March for the third deployment to Tasmania. They will be deployed for a 1-10-1 work cycle – meaning one day’s travel, 10 days’ work and one day of travelling home.

There is one IMT in operation in the Southern Region (Cambridge Complex). The fires are divided into four divisions: Geevston (Riveaux Road), Great Pine Tier, Gell River, and Lake Pedder.

Under current conditions, the Geevston (Riveaux Road) and Gell River fires will continue to remain active for some weeks. The fire activity is mostly in smouldering peat and organic soils and will continue until substantial rainfall. The ground fuels are coarse and heavy with substantial surface fuels, making extinguishment difficult and slow.

Access to the fire ground on foot is extremely difficult, with challenging steep and rough conditions, so the crews are putting into practice their remote firefighting skills.



TASMANIA WILDFIRE STATS

(AS OF 10 MARCH 2019)

20 FIREFIGHTERS FROM
NEW ZEALAND

3 CREWS FROM FIRE AND
EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND
1 CREW FROM FOREST
PROTECTION SERVICES

14 WILDFIRES
BURNING

4 ARE CONSIDERED ONGOING
6 ARE IN PATROL
4 WITH ADVICE MESSAGES STILL IN PLACE

206,217

HECTARES HAVE BEEN BURNT

1,825km
OF FIRE LINE

Reports from the frontline

Geevston Division (Riveaux Road) Taranaki and Auckland crews

Mike Donovan, Crew Leader, Auckland

Blacking out on this fire gets easier the further into the valley we go, although the terrain gets tougher. The crews are in good spirits and working well together, with no issues. The hardest part of the day is walking out as it's very steep and slippery from recent rain fall.

No wildlife has been spotted apart from the odd road-kill wallaby. It seems even the birds have evacuated as it's not often you hear any.

Plenty of humour is being traded between the Australian and Kiwi crews. The Tasmanian crews have passed comments such as "you Kiwis are machines". Clearly, the team are making a good impression.



Rob spent a good part of the day getting water in up underneath this very large tree to put the fire out.



Rob Beardmore, from Puhoi Voluntary Rural Fire Force, and Murray Johnstone, from Maungakaramea Voluntary Rural Fire Force.



Andrew Knox, Crew Leader, Wellington/Chatham Islands

The days are varied and we're all getting great experience. We've been cutting tracks, running hose lines and mopping up hotspots. The other day Dean and I ended up going bush bashing and directing choppers into hotspots further down the ridge. Another day we set up a 11,000-litre dam and cut tracks and ran hose lines – we had to helicopter in and out, about a 20-minute flight.

“The crews are having a lot of fun and banter, and working hard”



Elliot Cowley from the Wellington/Chatham Islands crew.



FPS/FENZ and Aussie crews working together.



Wellington/Chatham Islands crew getting into the hot spots.