

Information and updates for residents affected by the Pigeon Valley Fire, from Nelson Tasman Civil Defence and our fire response partners



Monday 18 February 2019

Fire Update

Firefighting efforts are continuing to focus on locating and extinguishing hotspots underground.

Crews have kept working to black out the area around the perimeter of the fire. A blacked out area is one where the fire has been completely extinguished, cooled and there are no hotspots. The initial aim is to black out 10 metres, extending to 30 metres to achieve total control of the fire.

Wind and high temperatures made for challenging firefighting conditions this morning. A forecast sea breeze arrived early, making for more favourable conditions to fight the fire this afternoon. As at 4pm, forest fire danger levels had dropped for the time being.

We posted a short video clip of Principal Rural Fire Officer Ian Reade explaining today's firefighting on our Facebook page today. Watch it [here](#).

A bit about Hotspots

We grabbed a passing firefighter to tell us about how they are dealing with hotspots. Here's what he told us.

Hotspots can be difficult to manage because they can burn underground over a long distance and resurface somewhere else to re-ignite unburnt material. There are hotspots on most of the Pigeon Valley fire, with a significantly large number present in the Redwood and Eves valley area. These are taking a lot of time and resources to extinguish.

The crews are using a variety of methods, depending on the size of the hotspot. They normally use heavy machinery to dig up and expose the hotspot and then they can wet the burning material and cool it down. Smaller hotspots are usually extinguished using hoses, shovels and other handtools.



The photo shows a charred tree root, which was burning underground and had to be dug up and cooled today, to extinguish the hotspot it caused.

Accessing your property – Teapot, Eves and Redwood Valleys

The forecast for tomorrow is looking kinder than today so we are anticipating being able to provide restricted access for residents of Teapot, Eves and Redwood Valleys from 8am to 12 noon. Fire and Emergency personnel, Police and our cordon management team will carry out a full risk assessment first thing in the morning. We aim to send you a text message with the decision after 7.30 to confirm.

We had some technical trouble with our text messaging system this morning. This has been fixed and tested, but if you haven't had a txt by 7.45am you may like to check the Nelson Tasman Civil Defence Facebook page www.facebook.com/nelsontasmancivildefenceandemergencymanagement and our website www.nelsontasmancivildefence.co.nz.

Redwood Valley Water Supply

The Tasman District Council is working to maintain consistent water supply to properties serviced by the Redwood Valley Water Supply system. One of the main water pipelines was damaged while a firebreak was created. It's been repaired but remains vulnerable and needs ongoing work. Because of the current access restrictions to the area, there are sometimes delays in making repairs. This means that at times supply to properties serviced by the pipeline will be intermittent.

From tomorrow, Redwood Valley residents going to their properties will be getting an information sheet from the Council when they pass through the cordon. It will have information about the water supply and details of who to contact if they have any leaks or other problems with water on their property. Shane Jellyman is the point of contact at the Council: phone 027 705 6750 or email shane.jellyman@tasman.govt.nz

Impact Assessments – Pigeon, Eves, Teapot and Redwood Valleys

Over the next few days, Fire and Emergency New Zealand will be conducting physical assessments of properties in the Pigeon, Eves, Teapot and Redwood Valleys. They will be determining any adverse effects the Pigeon Valley fire has had on residents' properties.

You may see Fire and Emergency personnel throughout the area and they might need to access private properties. They will be wearing uniform and driving in clearly marked vehicles. Don't be alarmed if you see them, and please allow them access to your property if they need it. They'll be carrying out an important task as part of the recovery programme.

Community meeting and information session

We're planning to hold the next community meeting and information session this Wednesday (20 February) from 6-8pm in the Hope Community Church. We will begin with short updates on progress with fighting the fire and any general information, and then move into a drop-in style session where you can talk directly to representatives from FENZ, MPI, our civil defence welfare team and others who are working on the transition from the fire response to recovery.

Mayoral Relief Fund

Applications for assistance from the Mayoral Relief Fund will open one week after the State of Civil Defence Emergency ends.

Recovery Manager Richard Kirby says that the criteria for making payments from the fund are being finalised. "We are aiming to make it as simple as possible while at the same time making sure that the payments meet a genuine need." The criteria will be available on the Tasman District Council website, and applications will open once the state of emergency ends.

The Tasman and Nelson Mayors will decide tomorrow whether to extend the declaration of the state of emergency. If it is not extended, the declaration will automatically end tomorrow afternoon.

Other Assistance

The Civil Defence Centre remains open at the Richmond New Life Church at 85 Wensley Road, 10am to 4pm, for anyone affected by the fire.

Do we have your details?

If you've registered with Civil Defence and given us your cellphone number then you should be receiving text messages from us about restricted access to your property, the availability of information (like this newsletter) and other matters. This will increase as we move towards the transition from emergency response to recovery. Please let us know if you are not getting these texts – phone 03 543 8400 (24 Hours).

Looking further ahead

You may have picked up from the weather forecast that New Zealand may be affected by Cyclone Oma, which is tracking towards New Zealand. This is also in our sights and we have begun contingency planning in case the winds and rain have an impact in this area. Those plans are in the early stages because there is a high level of uncertainty about whether and where it might make landfall, but we want to let you know that we are keeping a close eye on the situation.

More information

We are posting the latest information and updates on the Nelson Tasman Civil Defence Facebook page www.facebook.com/nelsontasmancivildefenceandemergencymanagement this includes livestreaming the community meetings and sharing information from Fire and Emergency, MPI and other partner organisations. You might like to "follow" us so our posts are more likely to pop up in your newsfeed.

Our updates are also online at www.nelsontasmancivildefence.co.nz/

We have a significant iwi liaison team working in the Emergency Operations Centre and they can be contacted by emailing iwi@nelsontasmancivildefence.govt.nz