

Green Wattle Gully bushfire expansion by maps

[Major Source = RFS Tweets]

Denis O'Bryan
Red Eagle Bushfire Services
29 Dec 2019

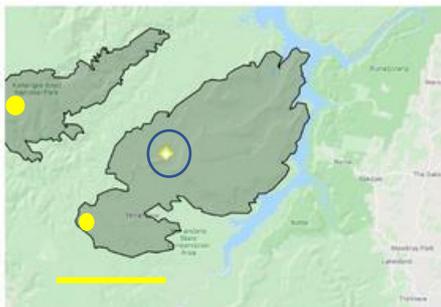
25 November, 2019 Lightning strikes near Warragamba Dam, which is Sydney's water supply



Yellow dots on first map below are lightning fire origins. Circled one is Green Wattle Gully.

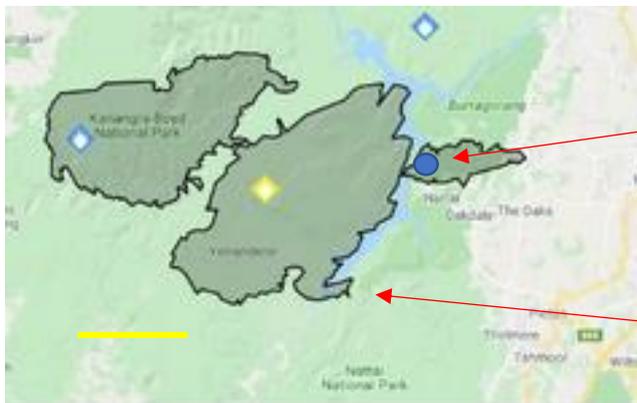
From 3 December onwards ...

Map scale is approx same on each map yellow line = 10 km approx



4 Dec

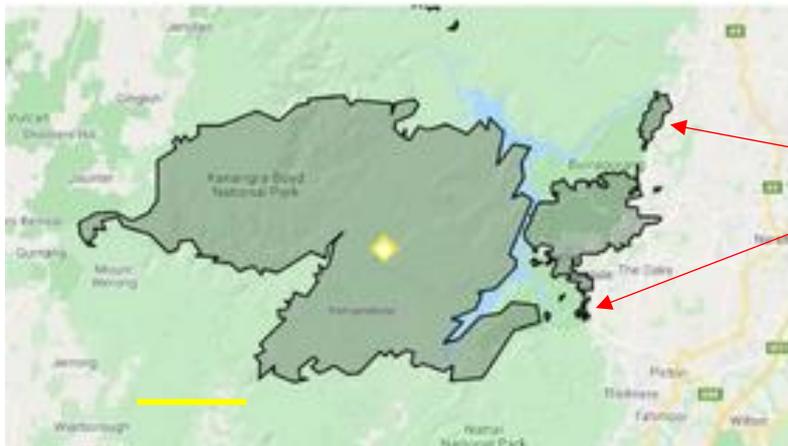
We presume the initial suppression plan was to stop the fires at the 500+m wide dam as a firebreak.



5 Dec

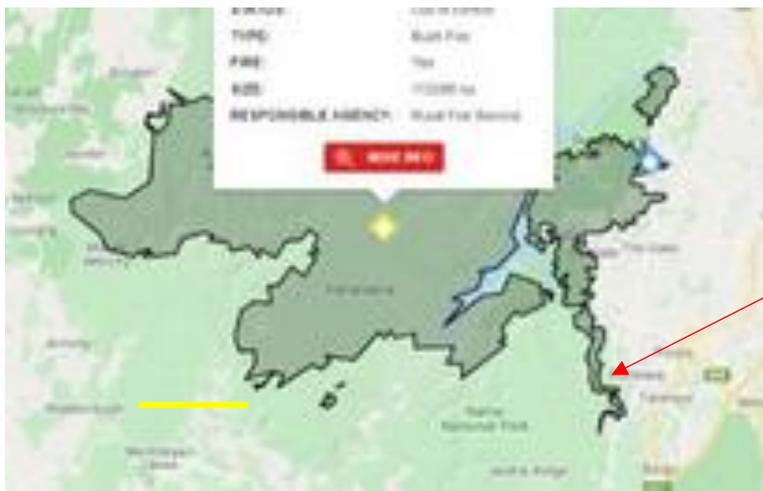
Spot fire starts at blue dot on east side of Warragamba Dam and runs 10km with W wind

No fuel break here



Backburning commences along property boundaries

9 Dec



Backburning continues along property boundaries.
Presumed plan is to let the western fire mass expand through the Park's forest and run into burnt ground

13 Dec



18 Dec

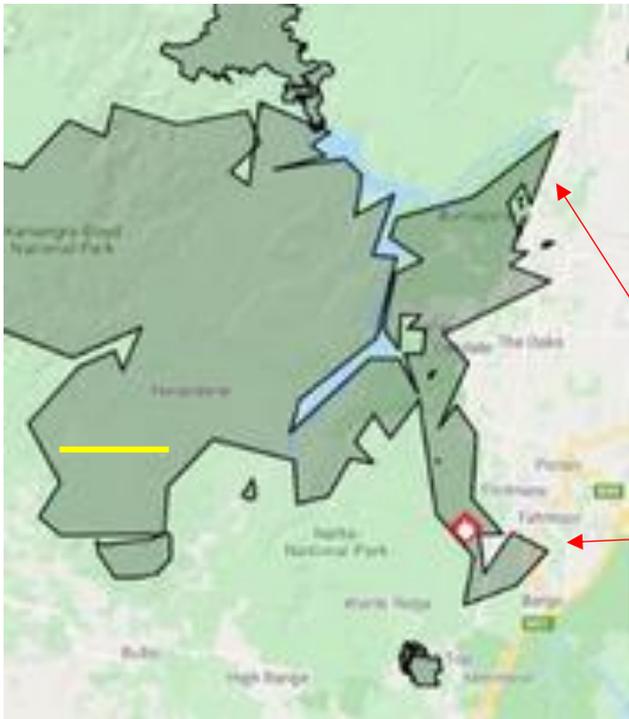


Fresh backburn line commences to south of Buxton, but escapes



18 Dec

18 Dec



Entire backburn line south of Buxton escapes.
Escapes are pushed by SW winds

18 Dec

19 December, 2019 Thursday, 11.30pm



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The 2 firefighters killed in a vehicle accident last night are Deputy Captain Geoffrey Keaton 32yrs & Firefighter Andrew O'Dwyer 36yrs, both from Horsley Park Brigade. Our thoughts are with their family, friends & fellow brigade members. #nswrfs



December 21, Saturday Day of severe fire weather

ABC on line reported: "The NSW Rural Fire Service said as an early assessment about 20 structures had been destroyed across Balmoral"

"NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian says "there isn't much left" of Balmoral in the NSW Southern Highlands, with the devastating Green Wattle Creek bushfire destroying most of the village".

COUNCIL AREA: Wollondilly
STATUS: Out of control
TYPE: Bush Fire
FIRE: Yes
SIZE: 200050 ha
RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: Rural Fire Service

[MORE INFO](#)

22 Dec

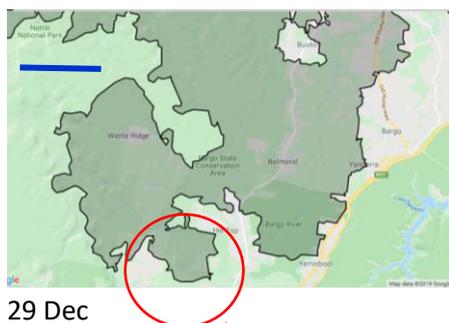
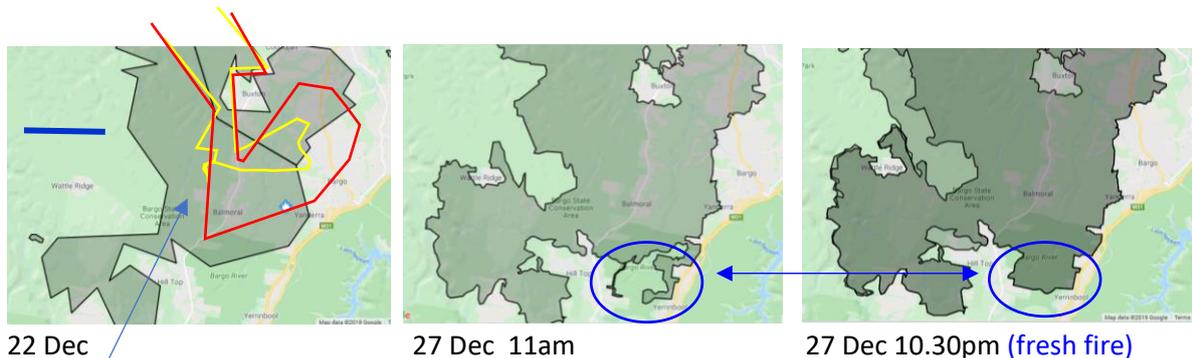
Oberon, Jenolan, Katoomba, Penrith, Jenolan, Wombeyan Caves, Kanangra-Boyd National Park, Burragoang, Balmoral National Park, Camp...

27 Dec

Balmoral
 The northern part of Balmoral was attacked on 18 Dec (see above) by the escaped backburn, but no property loss reported.

Close up of Buxton / Balmoral area

Map scale of blue line = 5km



Comment and Outlook

Progressive back burning along the Motorway as a fire break is a very high risk strategy in the height of a summer drought. In this case fresh fire on the western side takes out the flash fuels but will leave thousands of hot spots, ready to spark up on the next severe weather day – eg, Tuesday 31 December. The problem here is the destination of the embers – solid (inaccessible?) forest on the eastern side. To stop these spot fires escaping, they must deploy adequate skilled detecting and suppression resources on site.

The wildcard worry is the bit in the red circle, which if not yet contained, will run vigorously towards the Motorway under a NW or W wind and throw embers downwind into the forest. The Motorway may not yet have been treated on the western side to reduce flame size.

We live in hope.