



09/03/2016

## NPWS South Coast staff firefighters return from lending a hand in Tasmania

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) remote area firefighters and the Incident Management team from the South Coast Region have made a safe return home from deployment after assisting with fire-fighting efforts in Tasmania.

Local NPWS staff have been part of a rolling fire contingent deployed to Tasmania over the past 6 weeks, joining staff and volunteers from NSW RFS and other interstate fire agencies.

Strategic Programs Officer for NPWS Ian Smith said that in mid-January, Tasmania experienced over 80 lightning strikes and extremely dry conditions, resulting in a large number of fires, beyond the local Tasmania firefighting capacity.

"The fires posed a very high risk to private property, hydroelectricity infrastructure, forestry resources and fragile World Heritage listed areas and so interstate resources were requested," Mr Smith said.

"The main resources deployed from NPWS were remote area staff who were helicopter winched into Tasmanian fire grounds where they cut helicopter landing pads for crews following. The teams continued to cut heli-pads and undertake remote area firefighting in many parts of the state during their five day shift.

"Staff found the Tasmanian terrain and vegetation very different to local conditions but quickly adapted to undertake activities needed for fire operations in Tasmania. The usually moist rainforest was very dry, the country was steep, heavily vegetated and hard to walk through.

"Other NPWS staff deployed to help in Tasmania included incident Management Team members such as Interstate Liaison Officers, Planning and Situation Officers, specialist Fire Behaviour analysts and Air attack Supervisors," he said.

NPWS Deputy Chief Executive, Michael Wright said NPWS firefighters are recognised as some of the best and have provided similar assistance throughout Australia as well as North America.

"Close to 220 NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) firefighters have helped their Tasmanian colleagues fight serious bushfires burning in remote areas of the southern-most state where more than 100,000 hectares have been burnt.

"It's invaluable for our staff to have experience in other fire environments and for other fire agencies to have the benefit of our skilled and experienced staff," he said.

It is expected that NPWS will continue to provide fire specialists to help fight fires in Tasmania until the end of this month.

**Media Contact: Polly Epov 9995 6466**

24hour Media Line: 02 9995 5347

Email: [media@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Newsroom: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/newsroom](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/newsroom)

OEH website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)



[twitter.com/OEHmedia](https://twitter.com/OEHmedia)



[instagram.com/nswenvironmentandheritage](https://www.instagram.com/nswenvironmentandheritage)



[youtube.com/user/NSWNatParks](https://www.youtube.com/user/NSWNatParks)



[flickr.com/photos/48646673@N07](https://www.flickr.com/photos/48646673@N07)