



Update for residents affected by the Pigeon Valley Fire Newsletter #5 Wednesday, 13 February

This newsletter provides an update on the management of the Pigeon Valley fire as well as information that you might find helpful following the evacuation from your home. This is also a way of communicating directly to evacuated residents.

State of Civil Defence Emergency extended

The State of Civil Defence Emergency has been extended until 20 February 2019. This will enable the emergency efforts to continue to be well resourced with support from all agencies and central government.

Fire update

Overnight Fire and Emergency New Zealand crews were faced with an increase in fire activity due to a drop in humidity. This resulted in a few flare ups which were dealt with promptly. Today they are focussing their efforts on identifying and tackling hotspots, securing containment lines, and assessing dangerous trees. Fire and Emergency New Zealand crews are likely to remain for some weeks, within the fire area.

Today we have around 150 personnel on the ground, 9 helicopters in the air and 14 heavy machines (excavators and dozers).

The current fire perimeter is sitting around 33km, covering around 2,400 ha.

Please remember there is a total fire ban in place throughout the region.

Temporary restricted access for residents

Thanks to the residents who abided by the guidelines as we allowed temporary access to all evacuated areas for two hours this morning. We will attempt to make further opportunities available as long as it remains safe to do so.

Thanks for your cooperation. Road closures remain unchanged since yesterday.

Conditional re-entry

Work continues today to assess the possibility of conditional re-entry to the remaining evacuated areas. The planning and assessment of this is a complex process.

Factors that need to be considered and balanced include:

- Current weather forecast
- Fire Behaviour
- Availability of emergency personnel
- The condition of infrastructure within the fire damaged areas
- Geotechnical risks due to fire damage
- Damage around driveways affecting access to properties

The time it would take to evacuate the area versus the predicted speed the fire could spread is also a crucial consideration.



Our specialist teams are continuing the risk assessment checks for each property – and there are about 200 properties to look at individually, so this will take some time.

More details will be available as soon as more research has been done. We appreciate people are extremely keen to get home but the situation is ever-changing and safety must come first.

For those who are re-entering their homes, now is a good time to take photos and call your insurance company to log a claim.

Animal welfare

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is the lead agency for animal welfare in emergencies.

MPI animal welfare staff have continued their presence at each of the cordons during the restricted access periods each day. Any residents who have visited their properties and have animal welfare concerns, please approach the MPI staff at those cordons, and make them aware of your issues.

Where needed and where we can, our officers and vets are going back to properties to assess concerns for those residents and arrange resources, ie water, extra feed and assisting with the movement of stock to alternative grazing.

Federated Farmers feed line is distributing feed that has been donated. Anyone affected by fires and needing feed for animals can register for this help: Phone 0800 327 646 option 2. Availability is dependent on donations. Priority will be given to farms who rely on farm income for their living and have been affected by fire.

Call MPI on **0800 008 333** (option 4) to log any animal welfare concerns. We have now been in contact with everybody who has contacted us to lodge animal welfare concerns. In some cases when we have tried to call people back we have not been able to reach them, so please call us back.

MPI will also be at the Civil Defence Centre at Richmond New Life Church today to talk to anybody who has animal welfare concerns.

It's obviously still a very stressful time for those who cannot yet return home, and we urge people to access the support available. This includes the Rural Support Trust, the Federated Farmer's Feedline and NAIT.

You can also contact **Rural Support Trust**: for a free, confidential chat on 0800 787 254.

Community meetings

A Community meeting will be held tonight - Wednesday 13 Feb 7.00pm at the Hope Community Church on Raznau Road. We are mindful not everyone will be able to attend so we will be live-streaming the meeting on Facebook to watch live or later.

Weather forecast

The outlook for Thursday is for fine weather with wind - Southwest 5-10 km/h in the morning, then shifting Northeast and increasing to 10-15 km/h by late morning. Possible wind gusts of up to 40 km/h are forecast for the afternoon. No rain is forecast. Temperature rising to a maximum of 28C.



Health and wellbeing advice

Coping with stress and anxiety: Anxiety is very common during an emergency event such as an uncontrolled fire. This is a normal response to a very stressful situation. Talking to people and helping others can be both therapeutic and useful.

Getting a good night's sleep is also important. There are good tips on this website:

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/sleep/sleep-tips/>

Wakefield Health Centre and Wakefield Pharmacy update

- Normal services resumed today for registered patients at the Wakefield Health Centre.
- Patients who already have appointments will be contacted by the practice team
- Wakefield Pharmacy is now open to the public in Wakefield.

Free GP visits and pharmacy prescriptions: The usual fees for GP visits and pharmacy prescriptions will be waived for fire-related appointments.

Health navigators: For help getting healthcare, Nelson Bays Primary Health health navigators are available to help connect you to health services

- Local support (8am - 5pm): 0800 627 401
- Email healthsupport@nbph.org.nz
- If you need help accessing a GP please contact Sally.Tohill@nbph.org.nz PH: 03-5437841
- Healthline (24 hours): 0800 611 116
- Free-call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor
- in an emergency, call 111

Please refer to the Nelson Marlborough Health website for advice about smoke exposure, helping children to cope and more.

<https://www.nmdhb.govt.nz/nmdhb-news-and-notice/pigeon-valley-forest-fire-update/>

Have you registered?

Whether you are asked to leave your home or you self-evacuate, it is really important that you register with Civil Defence.

You can either go to the Civil Defence Centre at the New Life Church, Wensley Road, Richmond or phone 03 543 8400.

Civil Defence can help you with accommodation and let you know what other assistance might be available, like free GP visits or counselling sessions if you're finding things overwhelming.

You and your family may be able to get a Civil Defence payment. Work and Income may be able to help cover the costs of urgent or unexpected costs (e.g. petrol, food, urgent living expenses, etc.) They are also able to provide help with accommodation costs when people are staying with friends or family.

Other help such as benefits and housing assistance may also be available. Contact Work & Income on 0800 779 997 if you would like help, aren't sure if you can get help, are struggling to support yourself or your family or would like more information.



More information on who and what help you can get is available on the Work and Income Civil Defence webpage : www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-zbenefits/civil-defence-payment.html

Drinking water contamination information

If you are on a Tasman District Council (TDC) reticulated water supply, and are returning to evacuated areas, the Wakefield, Redwoods and Hope/Brightwater reticulated water supplies are all currently operational.

If you are on a roof water tank supply, any ash and debris that may have been deposited on your roof from the fire should be removed, and the first flush of water following the next rainfall should not be collected. Reconnection of the tank should only occur after the roof area has been checked and cleared.

If material has been washed into the tank in sufficient quantities to affect smell, taste or appearance of rainwater, do not drink the water.

Rainwater in tanks that have not been affected by ash and debris, and has no taint or odour can still be used for normal purposes.

You can visit www.tasman.govt.nz for more information on water supply, quality and testing.

Contact details and where to find the most up to date information about the fires, evacuation and the emergency response:

- The Nelson Tasman Civil Defence website: www.nelsontasmancivildefence.co.nz/news
- The Nelson Tasman Civil Defence Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/nelsontasmancivildefenceandemergencymanagement>
- The NZTA traffic pages (for information about road closures): <http://www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/regions/10>
- Brian FM is broadcasting Civil Defence information: 106.2 FM
- Parents are advised by the Ministry of Education to stay in touch with your child's school, via the school website or Facebook page. Please check for any changes to the normal routine and bus routes.
- The Ministry of Social Development can advise on financial support: 0800 779 997
- The Ministry of Primary Industries can advise on animal welfare concerns: 0800 008 333 (option 4)

Sharing this update

Civil Defence is here to help, if you think there are other topics we need to cover in this newsletter let us know.

Hard copies of this newsletter will be available at the Tasman District Council Customer Service Centre and at each end of the Wakefield cordon.

If you have family or friends that cannot access a computer, please share this information with them. Remember, it is ok to ask for help. If you need help and you're not sure who to ask, call Tasman District Council on 03 543 8400 (24 Hours).