

Australian residents urged to flee 18-metre flames

March 1 2010



File photo shows the township of Flowerdale, near Melbourne, in ruins following devastating bushfires raged through the community. A wildfire towering up to 18 metres (60 feet) high bore down on homes in Australia's western Outback on Monday, officials said, urging residents to flee.

A wildfire towering up to 18 metres (60 feet) high bore down on homes in Australia's western Outback on Monday, officials said, urging residents to flee.

An emergency warning released at 5:00 pm Sydney time (0600 GMT) said houses in an area near Eneabba, north of Perth, will be in danger in a matter of hours as the blaze burns out of control.

"Homes in these areas will be impacted by fire in the next three hours. Embers are likely to be blown around your home," the Fire and

Emergency Services Authority (FESA) of Western Australia said in a statement.

"This means if you are in this area your best option for survival is away from the fire. If the way is clear, leave for your safer place now and take your survival kit with you.

"Relocating at the last minute is deadly."

Some 166 firemen using dozens of [fire](#) engines and aircraft were battling the flames, which have already consumed 22,000 hectares (54,000 acres) of land.

FESA could not say how many homes were at risk in the sparsely populated area but said it was mainly [farmland](#).

Western Australia, a giant state four times the size of Texas, has just sweltered through its hottest [southern hemisphere](#) summer with temperatures averaging nearly 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit).

News of the blaze follows an announcement that Western [Australia](#) has sweated through its hottest ever summer, recording average temperatures just shy of 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit), officials have said.

Weather officials said the giant, dusty state roasted at an average of about 29.6 Celsius during the southern hemisphere summer, 0.2 degrees over the previous high in 1997-1998.

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Citation: Australian residents urged to flee 18-metre flames (2010, March 1) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-australian-residents-urged-metre-flames.html>

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