

# 'Herculean' efforts save homes as Australia fires rage

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Bushfires are an annual occurrence in Australia during the southern hemisphere spring and summer. This photo from 2018 shows a blaze in Queensland

Massive bushfires across eastern Australia could be blazing for weeks, authorities warned Tuesday, as firefighters launched "Herculean" efforts

to save homes from destruction.

More than 130 fires are raging in the states of Queensland and New South Wales, fuelled by [strong winds](#) and a prolonged drought, in an unusually ferocious and early start to the wildfire season.

Hundreds were evacuated after a fresh fire broke out on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, where [video footage](#) showed a huge blaze tearing through forests and glowing embers raining down.

About 1,000 firefighters battled through the night to contain the blazes across Queensland.

"Last night's Herculean efforts resulted in nothing short of a miracle," Queensland acting Premier Jackie Trad told reporters.

Just one home had been lost in the area, Trad said, but firefighters continued to battle the flames on Tuesday amid strengthening winds, supported by water-bombing aircraft.

In total, thousands of hectares of forest and dozens of homes have been destroyed, with most of the buildings lost in New South Wales.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services acting commissioner Michael Wassing said the firefighting effort would continue "for days and weeks" due to the remoteness of some fires.

Bushfires are an annual occurrence in Australia during the southern hemisphere spring and summer, but scientists say climate change is exacerbating their strength and intensity.

Richard Thornton, CEO of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, said unusually hot and dry conditions

meant bushfires were expected but "it is the severity of the current bushfires that is most concerning".

"Without significant amounts of rain over a long period of time, we are looking at a long and dangerous [fire](#) season," he told AFP.

About eight of the blazes in Queensland are believed to have been "deliberately and recklessly lit" while some others had been accidentally sparked by children playing, police said.

A taskforce has been established to investigate the cause of the suspicious fires.

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