



Met Society Newsletter

For a printable pdf of this newsletter: <http://metsoc.rsnz.org/Newsletter/clipsfeb2009.pdf>

Those members who have chosen the postal option will receive a hard copy of this in their "March" newsletter

FEBRUARY WEATHER CLIPPINGS

Evacuated Mahia residents get all clear TVNZ/NZPA

Tuesday February 03, 2009 Gisborne Herald



Residents forced to evacuate their houses after a large scrub and forest fire took hold on the Mahia Peninsula near Wairoa have been given the all clear to return home. The fire, which had been burning since Sunday, was contained on Monday night after a hundred firefighters and three helicopters battled the blaze.

More than 140ha of forest and scrub burned in the fire, along with a number of buildings near Mahia Beach, and dozens of residents were evacuated.

Mahia resident Alice Wairau says many of the houses have also been overrun by cockroaches from the fire and fumigation will be the big problem for residents when they return home. "The worst thing was the cockroaches that came out of the sand from the heat." Wairau describes how armies of cockroaches have gone into YMCA Road homes. "They were running around to find somewhere cool."

(Abridged)

THE heat is on, Phew Zealand!

TAMMY BUCKLEY - Sunday News | Sunday, 08 February 2009



Godzone is set to swelter today as the heatwave wreaking havoc in Australia moves on to scorch our shores. Parts of the country will bake under some of the hottest temperatures we've seen this year

Across the ditch Aussies have been sweltering in searing heat. South Australia and Victoria were the worst affected last week enduring six consecutive days of temperatures reaching 45. The heatwave has been blamed for a series of deaths in Adelaide and Melbourne and has disrupted power supplies leaving hundreds of thousands of homes in darkness. New South Wales is also feeling the heat with emergency services bracing themselves for the hot conditions with temperatures there set to spike above 40 today. Melbourne is also set for another day of 40 C weather today. (Abridged)

Country sizzles as temperatures soar

The Dominion Post | Monday, 09 February 2009



ANDREW GORRIE/The Dominion Post

SPLASH DOWN: Luke Brown of Auckland cools off at the Wellington waterfront. New Zealand sweltered with temperatures in Wairarapa, Marlborough and South Canterbury climbing well into the 30s yesterday. MetService reported readings of 37.4 degrees celsius in Cheviot, North Canterbury and 35.5C in Marlborough. Wellington enjoyed a slightly less stifling 25C but Martinborough topped 33C. The central North Island was only marginally cooler, with Taupo and Taumarunui breaking 30C while Paeroa reached 32C. MetService forecaster Paul Mallinson said hot winds with gusts up to 100kmh roared across Otago and Southland, pushing up the fire risk to extreme levels. "With all this hot, dry weather there could have been some real problems ... but it looks as if we got away with it." (Abridged)

Bushfires add amber glow to southern skies

By AMY MILNE - The Southland Times | Tuesday, 10 February 2009



Smoke from raging Australian bushfires added an amber glow to southern skies yesterday.

The amber haze was a result of warm northwesterly winds carrying smoke across the Tasman from the Victorian bushfires to the lower part of the South Island.

MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said skies were likely to be clearer for southerners today as a cold front and rain were forecast.

"As the rain falls, it will run the smoke out of the clouds," Mr McDavitt said.

The hazy skies had brought warm temperatures to Southland.

Invercargill, Queenstown, Lumsden all had a high of 27 degrees celsius yesterday.

Gore and Manapouri shared 26C, while Wanaka had 28C.

Invercargill's 45S Weather Services forecaster Andy Fraser said the cooler westerly shift today should bring sky clarity and temperatures back to normal tomorrow. (Abridged)

Wanganui and Palmerston North mop up

By KATIE CHAPMAN - Manawatu Standard | Wednesday, 11 February 2009

And NZPA



HOW FAR CAN WE GO: Kids walk through a flooded MacEwen Place. MURRAY WILSON/Manawatu Standard

Surface flooding swept through Palmerston North yesterday after an intense deluge. The MetService said 64mm of rain fell in Wanganui on Tuesday and 51mm in Palmerston North, the bulk of it over a very short time.

Motorists were warned to take extreme care, as water - more than knee deep in some places - flooded into parked cars and closed roads.

There were reports of water entering houses, and sandbagging was carried out in the Heretaunga St area, near the Kawau Stream, and in Manuka St.

Parts of Fitzherbert Ave and Highbury Ave were also closed because of the flooding, and some cars trapped in the water had to be towed to drier land.

Chief fire officer Rodger Calder said fire services were yesterday rushed off their feet, attending 22 callouts by 6.30pm. Until yesterday, only 4.6mm had fallen this month.

In Wanganui roads were closed and sandbags piled up as council and emergency services scrambled to cope with the downpour. The deluge overwhelmed the city's stormwater system leaving properties and roads underwater. The only people left smiling by the downpour were farmers, with local Federated Farmers president Brian Doughty commenting that the rain was welcome relief during a dry summer. (Abridged)

Auckland hits record high temperature

12 Feb 2009 NZ Herald and Elizabeth Binning Herald on Sunday



Auckland has experienced its hottest day in 137 years.

The overnight low last night did not drop below 22.1C, the highest overnight low for February since records on that began in 1961.

During the 3pm hour, the temperature at the official weather station at Whenuapai Airbase reached 32.4 degrees.

NIWA climate expert Jim Salinger says the temperature is the highest since their records began and equals a high recorded in the Auckland Domain 137 years ago, in 1872.

Weather analyst Philip Duncan says the extra hot weather was due to a sudden clearance of cloud in the skies along with a gusty nor'wester. He says WeatherWatch.co.nz's thermometer in West Auckland recorded 34 degrees, fuelled by a hot nor'wester.

Mr Duncan says although humidity is lower today, the intense heat and sunnier skies means it feels much hotter - and a humidex reading of 38 was recorded.

South Island weather analyst Richard Green says far from Auckland's high, Christchurch is having its second coldest day of the summer. It was 12.8 degrees around 6pm and still raining.

MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said that the warmest time of year is usually the first week of February, but humidity stays high until the end of February. Sea surface temperatures, which make the air muggy with water vapour, peak in late February or early March. Normally, humans cool down when sweat on their bodies evaporates into the air. But overnight humidity in Auckland this week hovered around 100 per cent - the point where the air is saturated and sweat cannot evaporate from skin.

The hottest daytime temperature this month was in Culverdon, Canterbury, where it reached 38C. The hottest temperature ever recorded in NZ was 42.4C during a heatwave in Rangiora, Canterbury, on February 7, 1973. (Abridged)

(Newsletter comment: Henderson in West Auckland holds a record of 33.1C measured 3 Feb 1998)

Authorities rally for \$3 million weather radar

By Rebecca Fox on Fri, 20 Feb 2009 Otago Daily Times

Otago local authorities and industries need to join forces to lobby for a \$3 million weather radar to be installed in the region to give early warnings of thunderstorms and heavy downpours, Otago Regional Council chairman Stephen Cairns says.

Weather radars, normally funded by the Government, were spread around the country, but the nearest to Otago was in Invercargill, which was of limited value here, Mr Cairns said.

Otago was a "black spot", but a radar would inform accurate forecasting to both help civil defence and emergency systems, plus boost economic development. Government funding seemed unlikely, so regional authorities needed to unite and encourage financial backing from industry that would benefit from getting better weather forecasts.

Council environmental information and science director John Threlfall said storms, particularly on the east coast, could not now be predicted accurately.

Radars enabled predicting a storm's extent and severity.

MetService last year said it would look at applying to the Government for approval for and funding of a radar in Otago.

Taranaki bears brunt of bad weather

By FELICITY ROOKES Taranaki Daily News | Saturday, 21 February 2009

Also NZPA/TVNZ



CAMERON BURNELL/Taranaki Daily News

Raging rivers: Taranaki rivers were full to the brim yesterday morning after heavy rain beat down on the region.

Swollen rivers threatened to burst as torrential rain battered Taranaki yesterday.

While the whole country was drenched, Taranaki got the heaviest dumping with 301mm at North Egmont, 174mm at Dawson Falls and 108mm at Inglewood.

New Plymouth and Stratford escaped the worst of it with 57mm and 65mm respectively. New Plymouth Airport was closed for most of the day by low cloud and poor visibility.

"You're a wet place. Taranaki holds the top with Mt Egmont and 108mm is a lot for Inglewood, that's very heavy rain," MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said.

A police spokesman in Auckland said there had been 12 traffic accidents in the upper part of the North Island since the rain hit, with one serious accident near Opotiki, in the Bay of Plenty, where a woman received serious injuries after her car rolled. Emergency services attended incidents involving 21 fallen trees in the Tauranga area. Blenheim received about 60mm, and parts of Nelson and the West Coast about 30mm.

MetService spokesman Bob McDavitt said the rain is due to a low pressure system which is a combination of the one that brought floods to New South Wales earlier in the week and the remains of Tropical Cyclone Innis from near New Caledonia. In Wellington, a massive downpour brought a month's worth of rain in just a few hours and sparked health warnings after raw sewage poured into Wellington Harbour and Lyall Bay.

The downpour overwhelmed the city's drainage system yesterday morning sending untreated sewage into a street near Courtenay Place, just a day before the entertainment zone hosts the Cuba St Carnival parade. The city copped 69mm of rain yesterday, well over the expected entire February average of 62mm.

(Abridged)

Sun shines on Cuba St. Carnival

Stuff.co.nz | Saturday, 21 February 2009



BATHED IN SUNSHINE: the weather gods have smiled on Wellington for the Cuba Street Carnival, with yesterday's deluge a distant memory.

Thousands of people have packed into central Wellington streets for the 10th anniversary edition of the carnival.

Revellers said it was hot and people were packed shoulder to shoulder in Cuba Street this afternoon, with forecast strong northerlies turning out to be relatively benign. (Abridged)

Heavy rainfall predicted for weekend

By Rebecca Fox on Sat, 21 Feb 2009 Otago Daily Times



St Clair Salt Water Pool regular Veronica Parker enjoys the 27degC water in the rain. Photo by Stephen Jaquiery.

Between 100-140mm was expected to fall in the eastern hills between 8pm yesterday and about midnight tonight, MetService forecaster Oliver Druce said last night. "It won't be unusually intense rain, but there will be a lot of it over about 30 hours." The heaviest falls were likely to be this morning, easing off to light rain tomorrow and showers on Monday.

Mr Druce said people should expect smaller rivers which began in the eastern hills to rise somewhat. River levels were still below average last night, according to the Otago Regional Council's automated telephone service. Most river levels were steady, but the Kakanui was rising.

MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said eastern Otago weather had been pretty close to normal for a February, except for the low pressure system off the Chatham Islands, which produced eight days of sou'westers.

Mr McDavitt said early February temperatures hit 33degC (on the 8th) and the average temperature for the month was 14degC, only one degree less than the long-term mean. Temperatures at night were still in double figures.

Dunedin hydrologist Dave Stewart said the country was being impacted by a La Nina weather pattern similar to last summer, but it was producing different weather to last February. "It's not ideal summer weather. It remains to be seen how long this weather pattern will last."

However, the region was likely to get more summer weather in March and April.

Flooded rivers begin to drop

The Timaru Herald | Saturday, 21 February 2009



JEFF TOLLAN/Timaru Herald

The Te Ngawai River, near Pleasant Point had a peak flow of 255cumecs today, after registering just half a cumec on Friday.



PAUL O'ROURKE/Timaru Herald

Full force: Water races past the Pareora Dam.

South Canterbury's flooded rivers were starting to drop late this afternoon as the heavy rain that has drenched the region over the past 36 hours eased as it moved south. But residents in Waimate have been asked to conserve water and to also boil it, as with water users in the Waitaki area.

Over the past 36 hours up to 150mm of rain fell in the South Canterbury foothills resulting in moderate floods in all South Canterbury's rivers and streams, Phil Lees, Environment Canterbury's (ECan) Flood Controller said this afternoon. There has also been extensive surface flooding including water lying across State Highway One in at least 10 places between Timaru and Glenavy to the south and also on State Highway 82 between Waimate and Kurow.

River and rainfall information is updated regularly at <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/>

Westport Weather Makes TVNZ Map

Monday 23 February, 2009

The west coast town of Westport will debut on the TVNZ weather map during ONE NEWS this evening marking the start of a daily forecast for Buller in all TVNZ weather bulletins.

Jim Hickey has the honour of unveiling the new map and delivering the first forecast for Westport at 6:50pm tonight, "I'm a Westie, I grew up in New Plymouth on the North Island's West Coast and so I appreciate how dominant the weather is and how much the hardy folk of Buller love their environment".

"Although the West Coast is famous for its wild weather and blustery westerlies, the first forecast for Westport is for a windless warm day, so calm in fact we don't expect to get a wind direction reading".

ONE News Editor, Paul Patrick decided to include Westport on the weather map despite its small population, "Only 3,900 people live in Westport but the weather has a significant impact on lifestyles and livelihoods and it also brings it into line with the rest of the country where we have a forecast for the biggest urban area in each province or major region".

Hokitika and Greymouth will remain on the weather map and from this evening Westport will feature in all TVNZ weather forecasts including: Breakfast, Midday, Te Karere, ONE News 4:30pm, ONE News 6pm, Tonight and all bulletins on TVNZ7.

New Auckland base for NIWA

25 February 2009

Minister for Research, Science and Technology Wayne Mapp opened the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research's new premises at the Viaduct Harbour in Auckland today.

The move to the refitted historic City Market building on Market Place from landlocked Khyber Pass Road brings NIWA closer to many of their key clients.

"The choice of the Viaduct is an expression of confidence in the future, and its profile in the science community. It gives an opportunity to showcase the importance of science, and particularly NIWA's role in oceanographic and climate research," Dr Mapp said.

"The role that NIWA has in these areas is of global significance. To have members of the NIWA team among the group of scientists who received the Nobel Peace Prize is a great testament to the quality of the climate research.

"NIWA's marine aquaculture is pioneering, particularly in the cultivating of paua. This is how whole new markets and products are developed. Their work in oceanographic and climate research is among the most important scientific research of the 21st century. I'm sure they will keep delivering that here, right by the ocean, one of the main focuses of their work."

The renovated building contains NIWA's corporate head office and laboratory space for its scientists. "NIWA's decision to renovate, rather than buy new, and the smart and efficient environmental choices made in that renovation, reflect the contemporary urban scene and New Zealand's pride in its environment," the Minister said.

**"This new building shows an organisation that is strong and confident. It is a commitment to the people who make up NIWA. I congratulate the NIWA management and research teams on that expression of confidence, which is now so important, not just for yourselves but also the wider community."
ENDS**

Wet weather postpones Ellerslie Derby Day Saturday February 28, 2009 Newstalk ZB / ONE Sport



Auckland's wet weather has forced New Zealand Derby Day at Ellerslie to be postponed by 24 hours.

After inspecting the track and assessing the latest weather forecasts officials have decided to call-off Saturday's racing.

Auckland Racing chief executive Chris Weaver said the track was passed safe to ride on but after consulting the Met Service again they decided to postpone the meet.

The race meeting is headlined by the two point two million dollar New Zealand Derby, the country's richest horse race.