
AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRES COMBINE TO FORM 'MEGA FIRE' NORTH OF SYDNEY

- 09.12.2019

Aljazeera (6 December 2019)

An estimated two million hectares of land have burned so far on the continent, the size of some smaller countries.

Several Australian bushfires have combined to form a "mega fire" that is burning out of control across a swath of land north of Sydney, authorities said, warning they cannot contain the blaze.

New South Wales Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers on Friday said "there are probably more than eight fires in all" that have merged to form what has been dubbed a "mega fire" in an area of the national park forest.

The blaze was burning across 300,000 hectares (740,000 acres) - with a front roughly 60km (37 miles) wide - within an hour's drive of Australia's largest city, which was again subsumed in a soup of toxic smoke.

We "cannot stop these fires, they will just keep burning until conditions ease, and then we'll try to do what we can to contain them," he told public broadcaster AB

"The best thing we can do is try to protect property and people as much as we can."

Prolonged drought has left much of eastern Australia tinder-dry and spot fires have raged every day for the past three months.

There were 108 fires burning in Australia's New South Wales, with 74 of those burning out of control, local media reported.

Bushfires are common in Australia but scientists say this year's season has come earlier and with more intensity due to a prolonged drought and climatic conditions fuelled by global warming.

Dramatic footage of firefighters running from a wall of fire ripping through the tree canopy above them was captured overnight in Orangeville, less than 100km (62 miles) west of Sydney.

Read more at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/australia-bushfires-combine-form-mega-fire-north-sydney-191206074513633.html>