Pinery

A summary of the major fire of November 2015

Photo: Damian Barton
Pinery – largest grass and crop fire in the Mid North since Tarlee fire in 1996
Pinery – summary

• The fire originated at Pinery in SA’s Mid North on Wednesday 25 November 2015
• It became the largest crop and grass fire in the mid north since Tarlee in 1996.
• 82,500 hectares burnt in a single afternoon.
• Tragically, two lives were lost and five people suffered critical injuries, numerous properties were destroyed along with many thousands of livestock as well as significant crop losses.
• The fire burnt in a south/south easterly direction under very strong winds then moved in a north/north easterly direction under the influence of a wind change.
• Many CFS resources were dedicated to battling and containing this blaze including more than 1,000 CFS volunteers, staff, farm fire units and hundreds of vehicles, supported by MFS, SES and more than 300 firefighters from Victoria plus aircraft from New South Wales.
Pinery – summary

- First ground crews dispatched at 12.05 to ignition point on Port Lorne road, Pinery. First bombers deployed at 12.18

- First bushfire advice message issued at 12.24pm, followed by the first Emergency Warning Message five minutes later.

- Winds were initially NW, driving the fire in a SE direction. Westerly wind change expected between 14:00 and 15:30. Report radioed in at 15:02 of a significant wind change at the head of the fire, causing it to burn north.

- Crews from the CFA in Victoria started arriving on November 26

- The Pinery fire was declared contained on Nov 27 and controlled on Dec 1. After this point, crews only sent out in response to reports from members of the public.
PINERY FIRE BY THE NUMBERS

TIMELINE

25 November
12.05 pm fire reported
27 November Contained
1 December Controlled

82,566.5 hectares
265.4 kilometre perimeter

1700 personnel
(including 311 Victorian volunteers)

16 aircraft
Pinery Fire by the Numbers

The Toll

- 2 deaths
- 90 injuries
- 91 houses destroyed
- 271 farm buildings destroyed
- 483 vehicles destroyed

Animals Destroyed

- 53,679 poultry
- 17,986 sheep
- 500 pigs
- 87 cattle

South Australian Country Fire Service

www.cfs.sa.gov.au
Photo: Channel Nine
Mallala, 25/11/15. Photo: Channel Nine
Pinery Fire
25th November 2015
13:50hrs

South Australian COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE
www.cfs.sa.gov.au
Many CFS volunteers and staff work in non-operational roles behind the scenes for a major incident like the Pinery bushfire, when support was provided to operational staff at three levels.

Incidents are managed in accordance with the Australasian Inter Service Incident Management System (AIIIMS).

**Incident management team – at Angaston CFS.**

- Established within 30 minutes of fire starting and ran round the clock for 7 days
- Approx. 180 staff and volunteers from CFS, DEWNR and SES with liaison from SAPOL, MFS, LGA, DPTI, PIRSA, St John, SAAS, Salvation Army, SA Health, SA Water, SA Power Networks and Recovery.

IMTs are set up as close as possible to the incident at designated venues and provide overall direction of response activities. IMTs provide eight main functions, including incident control, planning, intelligence, logistics and public information. Extra resources and expertise brought in as needed.
Pinery – behind the scenes

Regional Coordination Centre - Region 2 headquarters in Gawler

• The RCC operated for eight days from November 25 on around the clock shifts.
• Between five and 30 staff and volunteers were on duty at any one time.
• The role of RCCs includes co-ordinating the allocation of CFS resources, supporting the IMT and firefighters, collecting intelligence, and liaising with other emergency services.
• RCCs also provide vital information to the community by issuing Bushfire Advice, Watch and Act and Emergency Warning messages.
Pinery – behind the scenes

State Coordination Centre – CFS Headquarters, Waymouth St, Adelaide

• The SCC was activated at 8am on Nov 25 due to the severity of the predicted weather

• 54 staff and volunteers served in the SCC, covering roles including State Coordinator, intelligence, mapping, fire behaviour analysis, social media, Bushfire Information Hotline operators, logistics and media liaison.

• After November 25, the SCC was maintained for five more days, with up to 29 staff and volunteers on any one day. Night shifts served from November 26 to 27.

• The SCC supports safe CFS operations by preparedness, planning and information flow to protect the community. Functions provided by the SCC include resource coordination, intelligence, facilitation of logistics requests, information to the media, and community liaison with other emergency services. The SCC provides and coordinates firefighting aircraft.
During major fires the CFS makes it a priority to keep the community informed

- A total of 44 advice messages were issued between Nov 25 and Dec 1 to media outlets and posted on the CFS website, Facebook and Twitter
  - 23 Bushfire Advice Messages
  - 13 Watch and Act Messages
  - 8 Emergency Warning Messages
Pinery – Informing The Community

• On November 25, 2015, eight Emergency Alert (EA) campaigns were initiated by the CFS to deliver messages to the public about the Pinery fire.
• It successfully delivered 121,569 Short Message Service (SMS) messages to mobile phones and 21,734 voice messages answered by fixed line phones.
• All EA campaign modes were used during the fires exercising the system’s full functionality.
Between Nov 25 and Dec 1, there were:

- 279,483 visits to the CFS website and 719,247 views
- Facebook CFS reached 1.5 million people, while Facebook CFS updates reached 938,607
- 1.8 million impressions on the @cfsalerts Twitter account and 127,400 impressions on @cfstalk
Pinery – Informing The Community

Bushfire Information Hotline

- Total of 9045 calls received between 1am and 11pm on Nov 25, peaking at approx 2,300 calls between 2pm and 3pm
- 1,694 calls received between 12am and 11pm on Nov 26, peaking at approx 185 calls between 6am and 7am

Community meetings

The CFS held community meetings to provide information face-to-face to people affected by the fire in their local areas. These were held at:

- Gawler: Nov 26, 80 people
- Balaklava: Nov 26, 50 people
- Mallala: Nov 27, 160 people
- Kapunda: Nov 27, 230 people
Pinery – informing the community

• Covered extensively by state, national and international media, resulting in hundreds of radio, television, print and online reports.
• Interviews began 10 minutes after the first EWM was broadcast on ABC Radio 891. The station then cut into national broadcasting to follow the fire.
• Senior CFS representatives did 16 broadcast interviews on November 25, from 12:50 to 23:05.
• Approx 90 interviews with those based at HQ (not including IC or in the field) between Nov 25 and Nov 30.
• 4 media conferences held over 3 days with Premier, CO Nettleton, SA Police including Auslan interpreter.
• 228 media calls were received by the CFS external media line in 7 days from Nov 25 (not including calls to MLO based at IMT).
Pinery – relief and recovery

- On the afternoon and early evening of Nov 25, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion set up Emergency Relief Centres at Balaklava, Gawler and Clare.
- The centres operated around the clock, offering temporary safe shelter, emergency relief grants of up to $700 per family, overnight accommodation at hotels and motels and a level of psychological first aid.
- A total of 2,566 people were assisted and 17 families were provided with 29 nights of accommodation.
- 1,149 families received grants totalling $645,930.
- The relief centres were shut down from Nov 29 and a recovery centre for both Pinery and Sampson Flat was opened at the Gawler TAFE on Dec 7.
- Mobile periodic recovery centres are being held at Kapunda and Hamley Bridge (and at Kersbrook for Sampson Flat).
- Under an outreach program, 718 homes in the Pinery area were visited and 795 phone calls were made.
- Red Cross, Lions, Rotary and St Vincent de Paul also helped provide services to people affected by the Pinery fire.

*Information provided by DCSI*
CFS and SES members hold letters of thanks to emergency services from students of Horizon Lutheran School, Balaklava.
As CFS is a learning organisation, a major part of the continuous improvement process is debriefing and after action reviews following a major incident, which is occurring within CFS Brigades, Groups, Regions and staff involved in the incident, along with other agencies that were involved.

In the weeks following the fire, the SA Country Fire Service Chief Officer, Greg Nettleton, commissioned a formal project to develop and implement lessons learned from the devastating event.

CFS is seeking to identify and implement any opportunities for improvement through the lessons learned process. The focus is to identify improvements to systems of work and enhance community and firefighter safety.
At the end of this process, CFS will have:
• identified opportunities for improvement from the Pinery fire;
• accepted or acknowledged any issues and consulted with those who may be interested in any such issues;
• worked with those who are interested in the solution to any issue to identify what CFS needs to do to address the issue, and;
• either implemented processes to facilitate any opportunity for improvement, or have developed a program (and allocated resources where available) that will result in the issue being addressed.

Project Pinery – learning from experience
Pinery – reinforcing the value of bushfire preparation

“By the time you smell smoke you have probably got five to ten minutes, tops….waiting for smoke to come over the horizon is just way too late.”

Ian Hempel farms between Roseworthy and Hamley Bridge. His property was in the direct line of fire on Nov 25.
Pinery – reinforcing the value of bushfire preparation

• This aerial photo shows how bushfire preparation work protected Ian Hampel’s small home block, which is surrounded by neighbouring properties.
• He attributes his success to his level of bushfire preparedness, as he had taken long, medium and short term action to defend against the fire.
• Ian says if people don’t feel physically and emotionally ready to defend their home then “the best place is not to be there”.
The CFS Community Engagement Unit works with communities to help them prepare for bushfires

- Run meetings, information sessions, workshops, seminars and produce a range of brochures and fact sheets

**Aim:** To create safer, more informed and resilient individuals and communities
Pinery – Community Engagement

• Community Fire Safe Groups
  – Community Engagement program to promote community resilience
  – Work with community groups providing practical knowledge and skills to assist them in preparing and protecting their local community
Pinery – Community Engagement

• Get more information about CFS Community Engagement
  – (08) 8212 9858
  – community.ed@cfs.sa.gov.au

• PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.
  • www.cfs.gov.au
  • Bushfire Information Hotline
    1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)
  • CFS Smartphone Apps
  • RSS Feeds and Email alerts
  • Facebook
    • /countryfireservice
    • /cfsupdates
  • Twitter
    • @cfstalk
    • @cfsalerts