

Chronology – 1965

Friday 15 January	Divisional forester at East Gippsland Roly Parke reported two lightning strikes near Brookville and Swifts creek had been controlled	(BD Advertiser)
Sunday 17 January	Fast moving grass fire at Longwood near Euroa with nine people killed.	
Monday 18 January	Warning of sudden increase in fire danger from CFA and FCV in East Gippsland	(BD 18 Jan)
	TFB declared	(BD 18 Jan)
	Thunderstorms in East Gippsland	(BD 18 Jan)
Tuesday 19 January	Lightning strikes north of Dargo. Reported in Thursday paper. 20 FCV crew initially deployed	Is this the beginning of the Gippsland fires (BD 21 Jan)
Thursday 21 January	20 FCV crew from Briagolong, Mt Taylor, Bruthen and Nowa Nowa respond to 250-acre fire north of Dargo (west side of Dargo river near junction of Littler Dargo river) which were detected on Tuesday. Aircraft used to identify exact location.	(BD 21 Jan)
	Another fire near Gillingall north west of Buchan.	
Tuesday 2 February	CRB depot at Anglers rest destroyed by fire	(BD 2 Feb)
	Other grass fires at Paynesville, Fingerboards and Lakes Entrance	(BD 2 Feb)
	FCV fire at Mt Misery reported on Saturday but reconnaissance aircraft unable to locate	(BD 2 Feb)
	FCV crew sent to Mt Misery from Swifts creek and Benambra to a 4-acre fire	(BD 2 Feb)
Wednesday 3 February	TFB declared	
Thursday 4 February	Fire at the Fingerboard spread by strong winds. Started on Wednesday	(BD 4 Feb)
	Fire crossed Fernbank – Fingerboards road	(BD 4 Feb)
	FCV, CFA, CRB and APM and Bairnsdale Shire involved	(BD 4 Feb)
	No house loss but about 200 acres of grass. Fire contained	(BD 4 Feb)
Thursday 11 February	Geoff Brisbane and Greg Wallace from the Heyfield office of Forests Commission reported small fires in the Humphrey River and Barry Mountains north west of Dargo after aerial reconnaissance flights in small chartered Cessna	(Gippy Feb 11)
	Other small lightning fires were reported at Winnindoo, Newry, Briagolong and Heyfield	(Gippy Feb 11)
	400 men, nine tankers fight blaze on 600 acres at Bengworden	reported 15 Feb BD
Monday 15 February	Fire at New place Creek deep in the forest north of Briagolong reported. Fears for Valencia creek	M Killeen

	Local CFA from Briagolong helping FCV	M Killeen
Thursday 18 February	FCV reports large number of lightning strikes during thunderstorms on Tuesday evening 16 Feb	
	The largest fire being 30 acres	
	Widely scattered fires. Glenaladale, headwaters of Tambo River, Wombat creek beyond Nowa Nowa, Combienbar, Buchan and Ensay	BD 18 Feb
	FCV Reconnaissance flights from Bairnsdale, Marlo and Benambra	
	Other CFA fires at Omeo	
Monday 22 February	TFB – warnings from CFA and FCV	BD 15 Feb
	The Gippsland Times reported that the Country Roads Board Depot, house owned by Mr and Mrs Leonard Garland and the Bullock Head Creek bridge on the Briagolong – Dargo Road near Cobbannah were all destroyed by bush fire that had been started by lightning north of Valencia Creek at New Place Creek a week earlier	Gippy Times
	Avon Shire graders make firebreaks adjoining houses and communities. These later proved invaluable near Briagolong	
	Additional reconnaissance flights were undertaken by Forests Commission Officers, Col Almond and Stan Butler.	
	The resources allocated to the fires by the CFA and FCV were escalating as conditions deteriorated.	
	Many forest roads were closed.	
	Fire at Iguana creek / Mt Ray north east of Briagolong. (I suspect this was the southern boundary of the Cobbannah fire which had started at New Place creek).	
	Fire wipes out Cobbannah at 1am. Mr Garland (CRB house)	Herald 22 Feb
	It was the fire at New Place creek that burned Cobbannah	Herald 22 Feb
	FCV camp at Valencia creek destroyed yesterday	Herald 22 Feb
	20-mile back burn at Iguana creek with 80 men	Gippy times 25 Feb
	Fire hits the Otway's near Forrest (8000 acres)	Herald 22 Feb
	Fire at Cann River, Genoa and Club Terrace	
Tuesday 23 February	Flare up of fires reported.	
	Two big outbreaks causing concerns.	
	Fire at Valencia Creek burned to New Place creek. Reported to have burned to Cobbannah and crossed the Dargo Road	BD 23 Feb
	House lost at Cobbannah Mr Garland	
	Spot fire at Cobbannah reported to CFA.	
	CRB depot destroyed.	
	FCV Aerial reconnaissance – failed due to poor visibility	
	FCV camp also destroyed. Firefighters withdrawn from area	BD 23 Feb
	Wind change at 12.30 am on Tuesday showered Bairnsdale with burnt leaves and ash	

	Big fire north west of Bindi – 1000 acres. Tambo River and east of Blackfellows Flat	BD 23 Feb
	Machinery from Ezards mill and FCV equipment of fire	
	Two fires at Cobon creek near Combiabar have been checked	
	Another outbreak at Pyramid Hill north of Club Terrace reported to be held.	
	10 bulldozers deployed.	
	FCV report approximately 30 lightning strikes in East Gippsland following storms last week	BD 23 Feb
	Fire near Dargo still out of control. Cobbannah burnt	Herald 23 Feb
Wednesday 24 February	Hundreds battling blazes in eastern Victoria. More men and equipment being sent to Dargo – 160 sq miles burnt. Men being sent to Omeo (8000 acres)	Herald 24 Feb
	New base camp at Cobbannah which was burnt out on Monday	Herald 24 Feb
Thursday 25 February	A third fire was reported and a 20-mile backburn undertaken at Iguana creek / Mt Ray north east of Briagolong. (see above)	
	Fires at Cobbannah and Bindi have quietened down under more favourable weather conditions	BD 25 Feb
	FCV and CFA crews working to establish control lines	
	Five bridges on Cobbannah – Briagolong road destroyed	
	Establishing temporary access	
	Backburning in Glenaladale – Iguana Creek	BD 25 Feb
	Telephone restored to Dargo	
	New outbreak north of Tabberabbera. FCV from Mt Taylor deployed	
	Progress made on Bindi fire. Now 7000 acres	
	350 firefighters battling two big blazes in eastern Victoria east of Dargo and near Omeo	Herald 25 Feb
	Base camp at Briagolong	Herald 25 Feb
Monday 1 March	The fires were considered under control by the CFA but there was a period of uneasiness	
	Red Cross active in Gippsland	
	Backburning near Mt Ray and patrolling Dargo Road back to Briagolong being consolidated	BD 1 March
	Fire Brigades on standby alert	
	Protective works around farms	
	Fire has been running for a week	BD 1 March
	FCV still having problems northern and eastern fronts at Bindi. Rugged terrain	
	Will have to establish control lines and backburn	
	Between 70-80 FCV and 30 CFA and sawmill employees on Bindi fires	BD 1 March
	CFA developed emergency plan for Wednesday	
Tuesday 2 March	Firebug on horseback suspected in north east Victoria, Reports from FCV	Sun 2 Mar
	Temp reaches 102 at 3pm.	Herald 2 Mar

Wednesday 3 March	103.6 F	
	With searing temperatures and strong winds, a fire broke around 10am out at property of Mr Gay at Blanket Hill north of Glenmaggie on and spread rapidly. This fire was suspected of being deliberately lit	
	Fire impacted areas north of Glenmaggie quickly	
	Wind later changed to SW	
	Fire impacts Coongulla, Upper Maffra, Newry, Boisdale, Valencia creek, Briagolong and Maffra on the wind change	M Killeen
	Fire travelled 15 miles north east in 2 hours according to Alf Lawrence	The Age
	Fire at New Place / Cobbannah would have also moved toward but nobody knows how far.	
	Valencia Creek CFA and private D7 constructs control line from Coongulla to Warragul Toms Road, onto Avon Crossing, across Avon River at O'Keefe track, onto Tobes Mess track than along Elliots Track then turning north along Morgans track to the Moroka Road. Trying to keep fire in the bush	M Killeen
	Back burning later commenced off this track	
	Several other fires merged to form formidable fronts and threatened many areas.	
	CFA begin to amass crews and equipment from across the state in preparation for weekend	
	CFA and RAAF crews had been positioned waiting the expected high temperatures.	
	The Red Cross and St Johns ambulance set up in readiness.	
	The next few days are marked by strong and erratic fire behaviour as the flames swept across farmland.	
	Fire reaches outskirts of Bullumwaal (probably New place creek fire)	
	Another fire 10 miles south of Sale	Herald 3 Mar
	3 firefighters were burned at Briagolong and taken to Bairnsdale	Herald 3 Mar
	Fire has been burning for 16 days	Herald 3 Mar
Thursday 4 March	Strong westerly winds were forecast	
	Fire east of Munro on the highway. Didn't cross highway ?? date doesn't fit	
	Order to evacuate Briagolong township	
	Fire at Valencia creek behind soldier's memorial hall, probably from falling ash	
	Fire at Bullumwaal	
	Fires at Tambo	
	Big fires at Eltham near Melbourne – 3 deaths	
	Big fires in NSW at Kosciusko	
	FCV report two big fires have joined up. Bullumwaal and Waterford evacuated	
	Sale prisoners helping at fires	Gippy times
	FCV reports 13 major fires across the State	
	Fire north of Newry around Greenhill	

	Families evacuated as fire jumps breaks at Glenaladale at 11 am under strong NW wind. Spread on 3-mile front. No house loss reported.	BD 4 Mar
	High danger had been predicted and lots of CFA equipment on standby	
	CFA HQ at Glenaladale hall	
	Local Glenaladale school has bene closed for a week	
	Over last 10 days 15 miles of firebreaks and thousands of patch burns had bene carried out near Glenaladale	BD 4 Mar
	Fire at Valencia creek which began had spread to Cobbannah a week ago.	
	Main strategy to keep the fire spreading towards SE from the forest onto farmland	BD 4 Mar
	Fire near Den of Nargun.	
	Tanker scorched at Calejero yesterday – Brian Potter	BD 4 Mar
	Fears for Mt Ray fire might break out and spread east, south of Davidson road.	
	Cooler conditions on 4 March. Work concentrating on tracking fire edge and blacking out. Warm conditions expected.	
	New trail from Davidson road to Iguana creek and another from Roderick's Lane to Parkers Lane	BD 4 Mar
	Instruction to limit back burning	
	FCV charter aircraft	
	Fire at Bindi – 30000 acres contained but spotted five miles after yesterday hot conditions in Reedy Creek area	BD 4 Mar
	Showers of ash and burning twigs at Briagolong	Sun 6 Mar
	Rain forecast for next week	
	Max temp yesterday 106.6 at 2.15 pm in Melb	
	Fire on 100-mile semicircular front from Bruthen to Maffra and within 7 miles of Bairnsdale	
	Estimated that 2000 men fighting Gippsland fires	
	Fire kills 3 people at Eltham	Sun 4 Mar
Friday 5 March	TFB declared.	Sun 5 Mar
	Hot with west wind from about 11am	M Killeen
	Temperature 100.1 degrees at 3.30 pm	Herald 5 Mar
	Lowest rainfall of record 9 in 64 days of 1965 only 54 points	
	Many spot fires from 1.30pm	M Killeen
	Fire impacts Briagolong around 2pm. Two houses lost	M Killeen
	Back burning had been underway north of Newry on preparing for the expected high temperatures and wind expected on the weekend.	
	Fire at Valencia Creek	

	Lots of volunteers from Maffra and Sale	
	Road to Stockdale closed at Highway	
	fire was at Newry	
	Out of control and crosses Roderick's Road firebreak at 10.35 and by 11.30 heading for Mt Taylor	
	Fire reaches Mt Lookout	
	8 pm – approaching Calulu	
	Historic Delta Bridge near Briagolong lost	
	Fire directly north of Wy Yung hall	
	Fire six miles from Tabberabbera on 10-mile front	
	35000-gallon water train arrived at Munro. Concerns about weight of train crossing Stratford rail bridge	
	Fire burns near Maffra Cemetery - 100 volunteers fight grass fire blaze (Sun 6 March). Fire had started at Newry around lunch time. Backburn saves the town	
	By 9pm fires stretch 80 miles from Glenmaggie to Bruthen	
	Civil emergency to be declared and soldiers expected to be called	Sun 5 Mar
	400 troops from Wat6sonai and Puckapunyal rushed to Gippsland	Herald 5 Mar
	60 RAAF plus Dakota from Sale deployed	Herald 5 Mar
	Briagolong - 500 evacuated	Herald 5 Mar
	Otway's fire – 12000 acres	Herald 5 Mar
	CRB and RACV make cars with radios available. Amateur radio operators as well assist	Herald 5 Mar
	Four families are cut-off at Tabberabbera 35 miles north of Bairnsdale. No-one has heard from them for a week. FCV and local timber workers trying to reach them	Herald 5 Mar
	Boy scouts banned from hiking or camping in Gippsland	Herald 5 Mar
Saturday 6 March	Start of Labour Day weekend	
	85 degrees in Melbourne at 3 am	Herald 6 Mar
	Preparations continue	
	Evacuations in place for Briagolong, Valencia Creek, Boisdale, Upper Maffra, Glenaladale, Newry	Sun 4 Mar
	Also, Shaggy creek, Mount Taylor, Sarsfield, Munro	Age 6 Mar
	Some Fernbank residents refuse to evacuate	
	Fire reached Munro from the south west	Mrs Edwards
	Two firefighters reported missing at Valencia Creek	
	Temps over 100F and north west winds forecast, with SW change expected around midday	
	Resources move to Briagolong including crews from Munro	Sun 6 Mar
	500 Army personnel from Puckapunyal and Watsonia plus 600 RAAF from East Sale including RAAF Dakota	

	4 am - Fire jumps road at Granite Rock east of Bairnsdale	
	Second water train left Melbourne. Another on standby. Railways emergency centre at Sale	Gippy times 8 Mar
	Later reported that water contains traces of Arsenic	Gippy Times 8 Mar
	Archie Hair from the Blue Pool reports loss of his home	
	Phone lines to Darg cut	
	PMG have set up landlines and wireless institute of Australia has set up radio comminutions	
	Red Cross has 400 volunteers in the area with four main aid posts	
	10 am wind picks up at Clifton Creek	
	Main bridge at Sarsfield at burned. Main east-west road link. Sarsfield township burned down	
	Fire at Dirty hollow west of Bruthen	
	Late morning – fires threatened one mile west of Bruthen	
	8 houses and mill reported lost at Briagolong	Sun 6 Mar
	2 houses at Briagolong + 2 houses at Newry lost	Age 6 mar
	Bill Gillio (72) refuses to leave Briagolong. Sat under veranda of the pub	Herald 6 Mar
	Briagolong evacuated.	Herald 6 Mar
	700 acres of APM pines at Stockdale burned	Herald 6 Mar
	12 houses at Sarsfield lost	Herald 6 Mar
	Stockpile of logs at Bruthen sawmill lost	Age 8 Mar
	3 am - dozer breaks down north and west of Bruthen and by & am back burning underway	
	Fires burn APM plantations at Stockdale with strong SW wind change	
	Stockdale was described as “gloomy and very frightening morning”. Residents could see the red glow from the nearby hills. By nine o’clock they could hear the roar of the fire as it began its next run but could not see it for the dense smoke. They waited and felt trapped. Then the wind suddenly picked up	
	The fire passed with devastating swiftness. Long fingers of flame raced across the bare paddocks and into the APM plantation pines. Sheep and cattle were caught against the fences. Fire came within metres of the Stockdale school, but the buildings were saved. Only their shelter shed, and tennis courts were lost	
	The fires stretched from Glenmaggie to Bruthen with at least a 320 km perimeter. Thirty-four homes were lost and about 250000 ha of forest and private farmland burned. Farmers were left without feed and fences. Within a week bales were distributed from Maffra	
	Minister Lindsey Thomson and Chairman of FCV Alf Lawrence trapped at Briagolong at 1.30am	Herald 6 Mar
	5.30 pm cool change at Briagolong	Sun 6 March

Sunday 7 March	Rain fell - but the blacking out and firefight continues in the mountains for another month	
	Big fire at Deadhorse creak east of Bruthen near Colquhoun forest	
	Tambo Upper devastated	
	MOOMBA weekend	
Monday 8 March	Rain in the evening. 15 points. First rain since Christmas. Mt Useful tower reports rain in all directions	
	About 80 people trapped at Tambo crossing	Age 9 march
	Smoke haze reported in NZ	
	Reports of sawmill at Briagolong destroyed	
	Still big FCV fire north west of Gelantipy in the headwaters of the Buchan River	
	Unions critical of firefighting efforts. Should have been attacked for the air.	Herald 8 Mar
	Lighting stated fires on Feb 15. Good summary of fires on page 3.	Herald 8 Mar
	Red Cross and CWA feeding 1000 fire fighters. Providing food for free	
	Tambo crossing surrounded by fire. 30 adults and 14 children sheltering in post office. 200 firefighters outside	Herald 8 Mar
	Swifts creek went ahead with its annual race meeting. Horse floats and farmers not able to reach town.	Herald 8 Mar
	Fires also in the Otways	Herald 8 Mar
Tuesday 9 March	Aerial photos from RAAF of burnt houses near Bruthen	
	Threat remains at Tabberabbera as well as active front between Bruthen and Tambo crossing	
	Volunteers return home	
	Fire at Ramrod creek north of Bruthen (photo)	Age 9 Mar
	Tambo crossing reported saved by 200 firefighters after 3-day battle. Wind change saved town. Fire crossed Omeo highway four miles south of village. Town cut off	Herald 9 Mar
	10 points of rain reported in Sale has given respite but has not put out all fires that have lasted 3 weeks. Rian has extinguished along southern and eastern fronts	Herald 9 Mar
	Fires still burning near Gelantipy and Bruthen. These will be left for FCV crews and locals. They could burn for weeks. CFA crews from west of Melbourne sent home	Herald 9 Mar
	RAAF patrols continue	Herald 9 Mar
Wednesday 10 March	Papers report that bushfire peril is over for now	
	CFA volunteers going home	
	Fire north of Buchan unchecked. Trying to hold on Tambo River	
	Fire threatened Gelantipy. Fire fast moving on 5-mile front. Fire started three weeks ago in the headwaters of the Tambo River.	Herald 10 Mar
	Alf Lawrence at Bruthen. Reports two major fires burning out of control east of Bruthen and Gelantipy	Herald 10 Mar

	Police report 200000 pounds damage including 30 houses	Herald 10 Mar
Thursday 11 March	Fire east of Omeo	
	More fires at Greensborough and Toolern Vale	Herald 11 Mar
	More fires across Victoria. East Gippsland bracing for breakouts. Hot north winds. Greta ocean road cut near Lorne	Herald 11 Mar
	All towns from Bruthen to Tambo crossing and south the Lakes Entrance on alert. Temps in the 80s. 400 men fighting fires	Herald 11 Mar
	RAAF Dakota sent from East Sale	Herald 11 Mar
Friday 12 March	CSIRO rain making aircraft	
	Circle of fires at Warrandyte, Dandenong Ranges, Melton and Eltham	
Saturday 13 March	Labor Party critical of Government firefighting efforts	Herald 13 Mar
Tuesday 15 March	500 volunteers began leaving Gippsland after emergency provision lifted. About 100 FCV crews left	
	Inch of rain had fallen	
	Calls for new body to fight fires in Victoria. Letter to editor	Herald 15 March