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Sydney bush fires combine to form 'mega-fire' – 9th December, 2019

Level 4

Australian fire-fighters are battling the worst bushfire they have seen. They dubbed it a "mega-fire". Eight different fires combined an hour's drive north of Sydney. The gigantic blaze is endangering tens of thousands of homes in its path. It is burning across a huge swath of land and is roughly 60km wide. Officials say it is burning out of control and is too vast to contain. They said: "We cannot stop these fires. They will keep burning until conditions ease."

The spread of the fires was made worse by a long drought. It is very early for forests to be so dry. Officials said: "There's a tough couple of months ahead and we've already seen the horrific consequences of fire." Sydney is covered in choking, poisonous smoke. Residents received advice about exercising outside. They say it is "unprecedented". An official said: "Peoples' emotions are very, very tested and frail at the moment."

Level 5

Fire-fighters in Australia are battling what is being called the worst fire they have ever seen. Eight different bushfires combined north of the city of Sydney. People are dubbing it a "mega-fire". The gigantic blaze is an hour's drive from Sydney. Tens of thousands of homes and properties are in its path. The giant inferno is burning across a swath of land and its front is roughly 60km wide. Authorities say it is burning out of control and is too vast to contain. A fire official said: "We cannot stop these fires. They will just keep burning until conditions ease."

The spread of the fires has been worsened by a prolonged drought. This is worrying authorities, who said it is early in the season for the ground to be so dry. They said: "There's a tough couple of months ahead and we've already seen the horrific consequences of fire so far this season." People in Sydney are suffering from dangerous and toxic smoke. The city is covered in a choking shroud. Residents have received advice about exercising outside. Locals say it is the "worst ever" fire and is "unprecedented". An official said: "Peoples' emotions are very, very tested and frail at the moment."

Level 6

Firefighters in the Australian state of New South Wales are battling what is being called the worst fire ever seen in the region. Eight different bushfires have combined north of the city of Sydney to form what people have dubbed a "mega-fire". The gigantic blaze is just an hour's drive from Sydney. Tens of thousands of homes, businesses and other properties are in its path. The giant inferno is burning across a swath of land covering over 300,000 hectares. The front of the mega-fire is roughly 60km wide. Authorities say it is burning out of control and is too vast to contain. Fire Service Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said: "We cannot stop these fires. They will just keep burning until conditions ease."

The ease with which over 100 separate fires are spreading across the state has been exacerbated by a prolonged drought. This is concerning authorities who say it is very early in the season for the ground to be so dry. A spokesman said: "There's a tough couple of months ahead and we've already seen the horrific consequences of fire so far this season." People in Sydney are suffering from hazardous and toxic smoke from the fire. The city is shrouded in the choking smoke. Residents have received advisories about exercising outside. Locals say it is the "worst ever" fire and is "unprecedented". An official said: "Peoples' emotions are very, very tested and frail at the moment."