

Hundreds evacuated as wildfires tear through Western Australia

Jan. 5 (UPI) — Hundreds of residents in Western Australia were forced to flee from their homes Tuesday as a series of out-of-control wildfires ripped through the state amid scorching temperatures.

Gusty winds combined with temperatures of almost 100 degrees in some parts of the state hampered firefighters as they contended with uncontained fires, including one near Lancelin, about 75 miles north of Perth.

Nearly 300 residents were evacuated from their homes in the area as hundreds of firefighters worked to bring the “Red Gully” blaze under control after burning nearly 18,000 acres.

Officials said unexploded ordnance from the former Lancelin bombing range is preventing firefighters from entering the community of Wedge Island, leaving it at high risk as the fire approached at 2 mph.

The out-of-control fire jumped containment lines late Monday and was advancing toward the towns of Gingin and Dandaragan, officials said.

Meanwhile, two wildfires also were burning near Geraldton, a coastal town of 37,000 about 250 miles north of Perth.

An emergency message was issued to residents there late Tuesday afternoon, warning them that it was too late to leave their homes.

“You are in danger and need to act immediately to survive,” the warning said. “There is a threat to lives and homes. Homes in this area are under threat by fire now.”

Several fires were also ongoing in the outskirts of Perth itself, according to emergency officials.

Source:

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