

# NEW FIRES BURN

## MORE HOMES

### Death Roll Now 8 —Two Missing

New bushfires flared up last night in the Eden area, on the South Coast, destroying 11 more homes.

Four houses were destroyed at Womboyn, a few miles south of Eden; six at Mullica; and one at Shadarack Creek.

Rain falling on a 200-mile coastal strip between Nowra and Eden yesterday damped down the other great bushfires which have brought death, injury, and disaster to the South Coast.

Further west, on the Upper Murray and in the Riverina, fires were still burning last night.

On the Upper Murray 2,000 people may be evacuated if winds whip up the fires again.

The bushfire death roll has risen to eight. Five were killed on the South Coast and two in the Riverina.

And last night David Begley, 20, of Reid, Canberra, died in Canberra Community Hospital from burns received while fighting Friday's fires at Narrabunda. Begley fell into the fire from a firefighters' truck when it collided with a jeep.

In addition to those dead, two men were reported missing yesterday—one in the Mudgee area and one at Canberra.

The South Coast fires—  
● DESTROYED 100 homes;  
● KILLED at least 30,000 cows and more than 100,000 sheep.

● DEVASTATED tens of thousands of acres of grazing land. Police put the value of property destroyed at £1 million.

## MONTH TO ASSESS DAMAGE

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By A Special Reporter

BEGA, Sunday.—The police here said to-night that it will take at least a month to get a detailed assessment of the South Coast bushfire damage.

## MOTHER HID IN WELL

They said the fires burnt out an area more than 200 miles long and 40 miles wide.

The five killed in the Bega district were buried in Bega Cemetery yesterday afternoon.

They were:—

Marie Otton, 16, of Upper Brogo, 10 miles north of Bega.

Jennifer Otton, 14, her sister.

Rudolf Ogilvie, also of Upper Brogo.

John Taylor, 58, of Quaama, who died after a day-long battle with the flames.

Jim Pree, 75, of Bega, who collapsed and died from the heat of the bushfires.

Mrs. Fred Otton, mother of the two girls who died, was badly burnt about the face, chest, and arms trying to save her daughters.

Police said she jumped into a well on her property when fire engulfed their homestead, and held a tin covering over her head.

She tried to pull her daughters into the well, but they broke away and tried to ride off on a horse.

The girls' bodies were found lying beside the charred remains of the horse a short distance from the well.

The saddle had been burnt into the horse's flesh.

Mrs. Otton is in a serious condition.

## DAIRYMEN'S

## DAIRYMEN'S LOSSES

Last night bushfire relief officials knew that more than 100 homes had been destroyed between Moruya and Eden.

Dairymen on the South Coast believe they have lost at least 30,000 cows, and graziers more than 100,000 sheep.

## P.M.G. MEN

### BUSY

Landline and telephone wires which were burnt down during the fires on Friday were still only partly restored yesterday.

P.M.G. linesmen said as fast as they repaired the wires in some places falling trees fell and broke them again.

Permanent repairs could not be completed for at least a month.

Yesterday people told graphic stories of the fight which saved Bega (population 15,000).

Mrs. C. Shearer said: "The fire surrounded the whole of Bega last Friday.

"The flames were fanned by a very hot northerly wind

and stopped at the edge of the town by the river.

"All the shops in the township closed and only women, children, and invalid people were left.

"All the men went out fighting the fires. Many tourists and visitors to Bega assisted them.

"The whole township was frightened because the majority of the buildings in Bega are weatherboard."

Mrs. Shearer's husband, Mr. Clarence Shearer, a taxi-driver, was trapped on

## Fire Victims Beg

## Beg For Coins

Bushfire victims yesterday lined Prince's Highway at Engadine and appealed to passing motorists for financial help.

Many stood in the rain waving placards at the continuous lines of cars.

Some banners asked the motorists to "throw a coin anywhere. We will pick it up."

Rain-drenched victims, standing in front of charred homes and blackened earth, collected money in boxes and outstretched sheets.

the Cooma Highway while trying to return to Bega.

He said: "To escape I had to drive my car through flames 30 feet high at a high speed. I narrowly missed having an accident when I was blinded by smoke."

Mr. Shearer added: "The firefighters did a wonderful job in saving the town.

"Old men of 80 fought the blaze beside young men of 18."

Bega police said that a fire ringed the Bega Hospital about midday on Friday.

Dr. John McKee and nurses, helped by patients, fought to save the hospital buildings. The fire swept

into the hospital grounds. Grass right up to the foundations of the buildings was blackened.

Citizens of Bega formed a bushfire relief committee on Saturday.

In response to appeals broadcast over radio stations 2BE, Bega, and 2XL, Cooma, people in southern New South Wales have contributed about £4,200 and 4,000 bales of fodder to

4,000 bales of fodder to help fire victims in the Bega district.

Trucks, including semi-trailers owned by the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, have been carrying the fodder to the railhead at Bemboka, 40 miles east of Cooma. Trucks from Bega have been carrying the fodder to stricken areas on the coast.

The contributions have been made in the last 24 hours.

Mr. W. G. Laws, a spokesman for the Bushfire Relief Committee, said today that the committee held an emergency meeting yesterday at which it decided to build temporary dwellings for people who had been burnt out.

"We must get the people back on their properties as soon as possible," he said.

A searching inquiry will be made by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Clive Evatt, into a report that a big fire was caused near Cootamundra by a tracer bullet fired from a .303 rifle.

## **SYDNEY'S MILK**

### **ASSURED**

The secretary of the Milk Zone Dairymen's Council, Mr. L. C. Turton, said last night that milk production must drop in the areas south of Nowra because of the fires.

However, Sydney's supply would be maintained from other areas, and indications to date were that it would not be seriously affected.

- **Riverina Fires Under Control—picture p. 3**