

Strong winds prompt bush fire alerts

by UPI

MELBOURNE - The ongoing threat from Australian bush fires is great but authorities are ready to cope with the danger, Victoria Premier John Brumby says.

As fire authorities indicated weather conditions would be extremely favorable for more fires over the next two days in the state of Victoria, Brumby said emergency services are prepared for the worst, the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported Monday.

"We've got more people on the ground, more tankers, more resources, more people from interstate, more aerial appliances than we've ever had in the history of this state," Brumby said.

Strong winds predicted to reach up to 90 mph are a major concern, Brumby told the ABC, adding, "If these fires get away tomorrow, you will see them race up hills at literally (30 to 60 mph) and that's why it's such a dangerous, dangerous day."

About 5,000 firefighters had been placed on high alert across Victoria as the 90 mph wind gusts were expected to accompany temperatures in the high 80 degrees Fahrenheit, the broadcaster said.

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