

Wimmera spotters keep eye out for fire

By *Emma Kelly* Wimmera Mallee News

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LOOKOUT: Mt Arapiles fire spotter Ron Jardine scans the Wimmera for signs of a fire.

Fire towers are an important resource for detecting fires during the fire season.

Picture: PAUL CARRACHER

FIRE spotters are manning fire towers daily to ensure the early detection of fires across the Wimmera during summer.

Department of Sustainability and Environment land and fire district manager Russell Manning said four fire towers were located across the region at Mt Arapiles, Mt Bepcha, Reid's Lookout in the Grampians National Park and Big Hill at Stawell, with about 60 across Victoria.

"They are managed on high fire danger days and throughout summer," he said. He said weather conditions could also determine the need for a fire spotter despite a low fire rating.

Mr Manning said fire spotters reported on both public and private fires and managed radio communication in the event of a severe fire.

"They fill a very important role for us and the community in spotting fires," he said.

"It's about fast, aggressive, first attacks."

Mt Arapiles fire spotter Ron Jardine said the Arapiles fire tower provided the furthest views of any fire tower in Victoria.

He said fire towers across the Wimmera communicated with each other when spotting a fire to ensure a more specific location and map reference could be communicated to the department.