

## 6 THE NATION HEAT CRISIS

# Records topple, city stumbles as gauge hits 46C

RICK MORTON

SYDNEY'S city centre was hotter than Bourke in the northwest of the state yesterday as decades-old heat records tumbled across NSW, stung by a stubborn mass of heated air moving from the centre of the country. The city recorded its hottest day since records were kept as the temperature hit 46C.

The previous record, struck in 1939, was 45.3C, but just after 3pm yesterday the official measurement at Sydney's inner-city Observatory Hill hit 45.8C and Sydney Airport registered 46.4C.

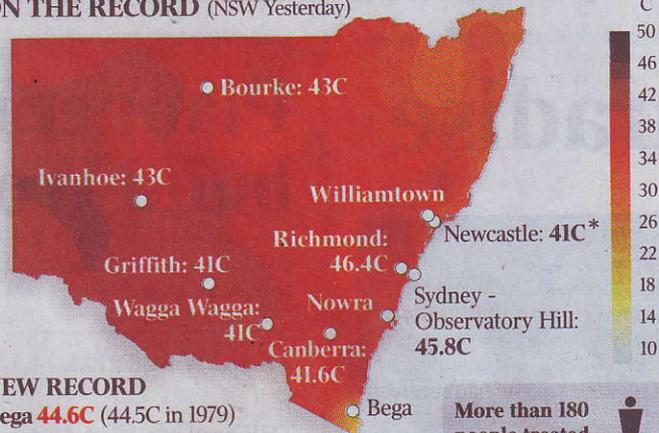
Records were also set at Bega in the southeast of the state, with 44.6C edging out a 44.5C notched up in 1979; Williamtown RAAF base north of Newcastle exceeded its 2006 record by 0.1C with 44.8C and Nowra did the same to its 2003 record, registering 45.2C. Nobbys Beach at Newcastle equalled its record of 42C. Accurate records began in 1859.

January is traditionally the hottest month of the year, but a delayed monsoon season and subsequent super-heated mass of air in the nation's centre pushed NSW to rewrite its records.

The two-week-long national heatwave, in which Australia registered seven of its 20 hottest national-day averages this month alone, is waning but NSW copped the last blast. "We're actually seeing a battle between the sea breezes and the westerly winds and the heat is staying right up," the Bureau of Meteorology's Julie Evans said yesterday. "In the end of a very long sequence of heat-wave conditions there was always the fear that we'd have a nasty day like this and now we have it."

To illustrate that temperature tug-of-war, the bureau's monitoring device in Sydney Harbour, off

ON THE RECORD (NSW Yesterday)



### NEW RECORD

**Bega 44.6C** (44.5C in 1979)

**Williamtown RAAF base north of Newcastle 44.8C** (44.7C in 2006)

**Nowra 45.2C** (45.1C in 2003)

**Nobbys Beach at Newcastle equalled its all time record of 42C**

\* 11 people, including children, were treated for heat stress by the NSW Ambulance Service at a Glenrock Scout Camp as the peak temperature hit

Bradleys Head, was recording a pleasant 29C thanks to the sea breeze, as the city hit 45C.

Canberra hit 41.6C — almost a record — and parts of the ACT also rose above 40C.

Last Saturday, the South Australian town of Moomba crept close to the highest official temperature ever recorded on this continent, peaking at 49.6C, which was slightly cooler than the 50.7C recorded at Oodnadatta in 1960.

Brazilian tourist Eduardo Dossantos and his girlfriend Silvia Miximo like to think of themselves as heat-fit, but Sydney's record day packed a punch and sent them straight for the pools at Bronte.

"I'm used to the heat, but I'm having trouble handling this," Mr Dossantos said. "It's pretty bad."

The NSW Ambulance Service treated more than 200 people affected by the heat, including 55 cases of heat exposure. More than

240 cases of heat exposure have been seen by the service in NSW alone in the past 10 days. Crews treated 11 people, including children, for heat stress at a Glenrock Scout Camp at Kahibah near Newcastle as the heat reached its peak yesterday.

The heat caused long delays and suspensions on NSW train lines, with warped overhead wires and fears of buckled tracks leading to afternoon peak-hour chaos.

Temperatures around the rest of the country were milder, with maximums in the mid-30s across Queensland — save for 41C in Winton — and the Northern Territory. Marble Bar in Western Australia topped 41C. Victoria's north absorbed the heat signature from a roasting NSW, but its southern reaches recorded temperatures in the mid 20s. It was a similar story in South Australia and Tasmania.

More than 180 people treated for heat-related illness including:

55 heat exposure, 89 unconsciousness or fainting, 37 vomiting