



Media Release

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## **Fire restrictions to be targeted to local risk**

Future fire restrictions may be introduced by ward in Selwyn District, allowing restrictions to be more closely linked to the identified fire risk in different parts of the district.

The change has been introduced following a review of the District's current Fire Plan. The Fire Plan sets out the measures the Council uses to help manage and control rural fires.

Previously restricted or prohibited fire seasons have only been able to be introduced across the whole of Selwyn District.

"Selwyn is a large district and covers over 2,400 square miles, running from the Southern Alps to the coast and fire risk and rainfall levels can vary greatly from one area to another," says Selwyn Principal Rural Fire Officer Wilson Brown.

"This change will mean that in the future we can introduce a restricted or prohibited fire season in one part of the district while not imposing unnecessary restrictions on burning in areas of the district where the fire risk is low. This will enable farmers to carry out stubble residue burning - a normal part of farming activity – in areas where it is safe to do so," Mr Brown says.

Fire risk is assessed through a fire build up index which looks at a range of factors including weather conditions and how dry vegetation is to determine the likelihood of fires starting and the difficulty of controlling fires once they have started. The index is monitored on a daily basis by Council staff.

If there is a high fire risk across the whole of Selwyn, then district wide restrictions can still be introduced.

Selwyn has four wards: Selwyn Central, Ellesmere, Springs and Malvern. A map showing the ward areas is available online at [www.selwyn.govt.nz/elections](http://www.selwyn.govt.nz/elections).

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