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澳大利亚新南威尔士州宣布进入紧急状态，截至目前，森林大火已经烧毁了200多间房屋。消防队员仍在持续灭火工作。预计天气条件将持续恶化，气象预报说未来几天将有高温和强风。以下是BBC记者 Jon Donnison 从悉尼发回的报道：

Here amid the smokey **haze** of the bush, the heat **hits the senses**. Temperatures are back in the mid-30s making the work of firefighters increasingly difficult. Helicopters whirr overhead dumping water on the nearby fire fronts. They're trying to stop several fires from **merging** into one huge blaze **spanning** hundreds of kilometres.

In several communities, people are being warned not to try and **stay put to defend** their homes. With hundreds of houses already destroyed, disaster **welfare** centres have been set up where families can start the planning needed to rebuild their lives. Most of the firefighters are **volunteers**. Many look exhausted; some have even lost their own homes.

The fires follow **unseasonably** hot weather; conditions are expected to worsen throughout the week with dangerously strong winds forecast on Wednesday and **little let-up** in the temperature.

## Questions

1. True or false? *The low temperatures are making the work difficult for fire fighters.*
2. Should people try to defend their homes?
3. How much are most of the firefighters getting paid?
4. Why might the fires get worse on Wednesday?

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>haze</b>	烟雾
<b>hits the senses</b>	(迎面而来的) 感官冲击
<b>merging</b>	合并起来
<b>spanning</b>	扩散
<b>stay put</b>	停留不动
<b>defend</b>	保护, 保卫
<b>welfare</b>	福利
<b>volunteers</b>	志愿者
<b>unseasonably</b>	反季节的
<b>little let-up</b>	(气温) 没有降低

### Answers to the questions:

1. True or false? *The low temperatures are making the work difficult for fire fighters.*  
**Answer:** False. Temperatures are back in the mid-30s (Celsius) making the work of firefighters increasingly difficult.
2. Should people try to defend their homes?  
**Answer:** No. People are being warned not to try to defend their homes.
3. How much are most of the firefighters getting paid?  
**Answer:** Nothing. Most of the firefighters are volunteers.
4. Why might the fires get worse on Wednesday?  
**Answer:** Dangerously strong winds are forecast on Wednesday