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Job with the million dollar view

• PATRICK CRANNY

Local News



EYE IN THE SKY: Paula Wronski has an office with a million-dollar view and plenty of fresh air, but then she has a 30-minute trek up a mountain to reach it. And the string on her wrist proves

Paula Wronski has a half-hour walk to and from work every day -- up and down the side of a mountain.

As the fire spotter in Forestry Tasmania's Mt Arthur tower, she drives half an hour from her Bridport home, another half an hour by four-wheel-drive, then takes the half-hour trek to the small hexagonal hut she calls her office.

She goes equipped with a mobile phone, a two-way radio, binoculars and weather reading equipment.

Forestry Tasmania operates three towers in North-East Tasmania -- Mt Horror, Dazzler Range and Mt Arthur -- all manned from mid-November to mid-March.

Mrs Wronski and her husband Tony work as environmental contractors and alternate their days in the tower.

A day at the office means going 1187m above sea level.

"You feel like you're on top of the world," she said.

"I don't seem to find it lonely -- if you did it for 12 months of the year maybe.

"But I get about four visitors a day -- bushwalkers.

"The serious side of the job is looking for fires, working out co-ordinates and directing crews to the area.

She also takes weather readings every hour.

Once she sees a fire she marks the measure inside the hut's roof with a piece of string.

She then translates that reading to maps, which are marked out in 1km grids, to come up with exact co-ordinates for the fire.

"That's the hard bit.

"The Tasmania Fire Service watch tower at Millers Bluff is manned according to weather forecasts, usually if the temperature will be 25 degrees or more.

Bureau of Meteorology forecaster Bill Laughlin said yesterday that today could bring the possibility of some afternoon showers due to a weak cold front.