

Case Study: Private Land Burn

Protecting Pt Lincoln from bushfire

Prescribed burning is one important tool in the shared responsibility of bushfire safety. This case study provides some insights into how and why the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) implement prescribed burns using the recent Proper Bay Road burn as an example.

November 15, 2018 marked the first private land burn in the Port Lincoln area. This burn in the Proper Bay area was carried out to improve the safety of surrounding residents in the event of a bushfire. DEW fire management staff in partnership with the Country Fire Service (CFS) are now working with property owners to reduce bushfire risk in the most strategic areas across the landscape.

Why was this burn so close to town?

The 25 hectare Proper Bay Rd burn, behind properties at Arrandale Close, will lower fuel loads for several years in some of the thickest mallee scrub in Port Lincoln. Burning the scrub adjacent to homes provides firefighters with a safer area to work from and protects assets from bushfires.

Why was there such a large plume of smoke?

Although a large plume of smoke may look scary and out of control, this is normal for burns in this type of vegetation. Getting fire to carry in mallee vegetation requires a degree of intensity, meaning that most burns in this area produce a lot of smoke.

Why was a helicopter there?

DEW fire management staff used a helicopter as another planned resource for this prescribed burn to assist with managing potential spot fires as well as provide information from the air during the burn. Some larger burns are ignited from a helicopter after the fire edge has been put in on the ground.

Why don't you burn in winter?

Prescribed burns need to occur during spring and autumn when the conditions allow the vegetation to burn and remove fuels effectively. During winter the vegetation is too wet, temperatures too cold and the humidity too high to allow fuels to burn effectively and provide protection from bushfire.

What should I do if I am interested in a prescribed burn on my land?

If you own land that you believe will help protect the community if it is burnt, please contact the Department for Environment and Water, Port Lincoln 8688 3111. For more information visit www.environment.sa.gov.au/fire-management

Preparation is key

The devastating fires in California and Queensland in 2018 highlight the need for land managers and property owners to prepare for the bushfire season.

Strategic prescribed burning is an important part of the solution but property owners still need to prepare and know what to do to stay safe.

For more information on bushfire preparation visit www.cfs.sa.gov.au



Large plume of smoke from the Proper Bay prescribed burn



Aerial photo of the end result of the Proper Bay prescribed burn.

Proper Bay Prescribed Burn Operations

How the burn was carried out

A significant amount of planning and weather forecasting goes into every burn before a match is ever lit. This ensures that the conditions are right and enough crews and trucks are organised.

Very few days of the year are suitable to carry out a prescribed burn as staff need to wait for the right combination of temperature, fuel dryness, wind direction and speed and relative humidity to ensure it will burn as planned.

The Proper Bay prescribed burn required very specific wind conditions to be carried out safely.

The diagrams below show how the Proper Bay burn was implemented.

As can be seen in the diagrams below, an easterly wind followed by a southerly wind change allowed the burn to be pushed in the right directions. Reduced fuel breaks were added to two sections of the perimeter in the weeks prior to the burn to add extra control lines.

