

## **Frankland District Community Information Session – Remaining Questions and Answers**

### **Why would you burn peat? It takes over 1000 years to develop?**

DBCA does not undertake prescribed burning for the purpose of burning peat. DBCA aims to burn the vegetation in proximity to peatlands to protect them from the impacts of severe summer bushfires. Where peat or organic-rich soils occur within or near a planned burn, they are identified during planning and specific protection measures are applied.

DBCA recognises that peatlands are sensitive environments and considers their protection during prescribed burn planning. Peatlands occur across many parts of the landscape and cannot always be completely separated from areas where bushfire risk management is required.

These measures include assessing peat moisture and site conditions before ignition. Burning does not proceed in affected areas unless the required conditions are met. Current research on peat moisture and flammability is used to inform this assessment.

### **What is explanation of burns vs time (years) since fire prescribed burn or otherwise?**

A “treated area” is the area within the planned burn boundary. The “actual burned area” is the part of that area that fire moved through, and it is generally smaller because prescribed burns are designed to retain a mix of burned and unburned patches.

DBCA records when an area was last treated and is increasingly using satellite-based fire-severity mapping to identify where fire actually occurred. This additional information supports ecological assessment, bushfire response and future fire planning.

### ***Environmental outcomes***

### **Does DBCA do both pre and post burn prescribed burn assessment of numbers and variety of native fauna?**

DBCA considers known environmental values, including threatened flora and fauna, during the planning of prescribed burns. This involves reviewing existing records, local knowledge and other available ecological information to understand which species may be present and how they may respond to fire.

Where the identified risks or conservation values warrant further investigation, DBCA may undertake targeted surveys or monitoring before and after a burn. The

type and extent of assessment varies depending on the species, habitat, burn objectives and potential environmental risk.

**What evidence shows that mineral earth breaks within root zones do not cause long-term impacts?**

Ground-disturbing treatments are used only where required for access, containment or firefighter safety. Before work is undertaken, potential impacts on soil, water, vegetation, threatened species and ecological communities are considered, and measures are applied to minimise disturbance.

Around selected large tingle trees, surface fuels may be carefully removed to reduce the likelihood of the tree igniting. The outcomes of these treatments are considered in future burn planning.

**What evidence shows that repeated application of fire retardant has no adverse effects on mature tingle trees or surrounding ecosystems?**

DBCA uses fire retardant selectively to help protect individual trees during prescribed burning. Products are applied in accordance with relevant approvals and operational guidance.

DBCA is not aware of research specifically examining repeated application to mature tingle trees. For this reason, application is targeted and used alongside other measures, including fuel removal, ignition techniques and selection of suitable burn conditions.

**Is that monitoring publicly available?**

Monitoring varies according to the environmental values and risks associated with each burn. DBCA does not currently undertake a dedicated monitoring program on the effects of repeated retardant application to mature tingle trees.

**Has DBCA assessed the distribution of red, yellow and Rate's tingle throughout the Walpole Wilderness Area and identified the location of these species? What precautions are there to protect these species in prescribed burning?**

Known tingle occurrences are identified using vegetation mapping, local knowledge, previous planning records and field assessments where required.

Protection measures are determined for each burn and may include selecting suitable moisture and weather conditions, progressively lighting burns to manage intensity, reducing surface fuels around selected trees, using fire retardant where appropriate, and providing specialist firefighting equipment.

### **What is DBCA doing to protect peat from regular prescribed burning?**

DBCA recognises the importance of peatlands and takes specific measures to reduce the risk of peat ignition during prescribed burns.

Where peat or organic-rich soils are known or suspected to occur, peat moisture levels and site conditions are assessed as part of burn planning. Prescribed burning is only undertaken when conditions meet the requirements for protecting these areas.

DBCA's approach is informed by published research on peat moisture and flammability, and ongoing research continues to improve understanding and guide fire management in peatland environments.

### ***Conservation***

#### **Peat and pigs. Why burn near peat bogs which allow feral pigs into destroy the bogs?**

DBCA recognises that peatlands are sensitive environments and considers their protection during prescribed burn planning. Peatlands occur across many parts of the landscape and cannot always be completely separated from areas where bushfire risk management is required.

DBCA also undertakes feral pig control through its own programs and in partnership with community groups and other stakeholders. Where peatlands or other sensitive ecological values are identified, pig control activities may be prioritised to reduce the risk of damage.

Feral pig impacts can occur following both prescribed burns and bushfires. Where significant impacts are identified, appropriate management and rehabilitation actions may be considered as part of the broader response.

#### **What is the estimated impact on endangered and vulnerable wildlife during prescribed burns?**

The impacts of prescribed burning cannot be expressed as a single estimate because they vary depending on the species, habitat, season, burn conditions, and the extent and intensity of fire.

Threatened species and habitat values are considered during burn planning using environmental records, local knowledge and field assessments. Where specific risks are identified, burn timing, ignition methods, exclusion areas and monitoring may be adjusted to help minimise impacts. Prescribed burns are also designed to retain unburned areas that can provide habitat and refuge for wildlife.

Prescribed burning is one of the tools used to reduce the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires. Such bushfires can have significant impacts on threatened wildlife and habitat over extensive areas, including the loss of refuge, breeding habitat and food resources. Fire management aims to balance the potential impacts of prescribed burning with the need to protect communities and environmental values from the effects of severe bushfires.

### **How does the burn options program accommodate avian flu risk?**

Avian influenza risk is considered as part of DBCA's broader biosecurity, environmental and operational risk management processes.

Where wildlife health concerns, disease outbreaks or access restrictions are identified, burn planning and implementation may be adjusted to minimise risk and support response activities. This can include reviewing the timing, location or operational requirements of planned burns.

Where no site-specific biosecurity issues have been identified, prescribed burns are planned and implemented using established environmental, safety and operational risk management processes.

### ***Biodiversity risk assessment***

**Given the risk assessment looks at '6 years or more' in one block rather than in more discrete categories; but numerous species need much longer between fire, how is the argument that burning is as much for biodiversity as it is for risk management justifiable?**

The six-year threshold is a broad reporting category used in prescribed burn planning and does not mean that all areas are burned at six-year intervals. Burn planning considers a range of factors, including vegetation type, fire history, environmental values and the requirements of threatened species and ecological communities.

Where species or habitats are known to require longer periods between fire, this information is considered during planning and may influence burn timing, burn design, ignition methods or the use of exclusion areas and other protection measures.

Prescribed burns are typically planned to create a mosaic of burned and unburned vegetation, resulting in a range of habitat ages across the landscape. This variability can help support biodiversity by providing different habitat conditions for different species.

Fire management also seeks to reduce the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on biodiversity over extensive areas. Such

bushfires can remove habitat, reduce refuge areas and affect threatened species and ecological communities. Planning aims to balance the protection of biodiversity with the need to reduce bushfire risk to communities and environmental values.

**We know different ecosystems respond differently to fire (intervals). Why aren't risk management and assessment tools for fire planning based on this fact?**

Different ecosystems and species can respond very differently to fire, and these differences are considered as part of DBCA's prescribed burn planning and risk assessment processes.

Prescribed burn planning considers a range of factors, including vegetation type, fire history, ecological values, threatened species requirements and bushfire risk. Nature conservation specialists contribute to the planning process to help ensure ecosystem and species requirements are considered alongside community protection objectives.

The aim is to reduce the risks associated with both too much fire and too little fire across the landscape. Where species, habitats or ecological communities are known to require particular fire intervals or conditions, this information is considered when developing burn prescriptions and identifying appropriate protection measures.

**What alternative risk reduction strategies were formally considered before deciding on prescribed burning of red tingle?**

DBCA considers a range of bushfire risk reduction measures when planning fire management activities, including maintaining strategic access and firebreaks, bushfire detection and suppression capability, targeted fuel modification, and prescribed burning.

The suitability of these measures depends on factors such as vegetation type, terrain, environmental values, access, and expected bushfire behaviour. In areas containing red tingle forest, prescribed burning is one of the tools used to help manage fuel levels and reduce the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires.

Large, high-intensity bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, biodiversity and red tingle forests, including damage to habitat, mature trees and other environmental values. Prescribed burn planning therefore considers the potential impacts of both bushfire and risk reduction activities when determining the most appropriate approach for a particular area.

**What published peer reviewed independent scientific evidence supports prescribed burning inside mature tingle forest as the best method of reducing risk?**

DBCA does not treat prescribed burning as the only or universally best risk-reduction method in every circumstance. The most appropriate treatment depends on the values at risk, vegetation type, fuel condition, access, terrain, likely fire behaviour, community assets and operational feasibility.

In many locations, prescribed burning is used alongside other measures such as strategic access, suppression readiness, detection, targeted fuel modification and local protection measures.

Published research has demonstrated that high-intensity bushfires can occur in tingle forests and can result in severe immediate impacts and long-term changes to forest structure and habitat. Studies of fire in tingle and comparable south-west forest ecosystems have improved understanding of fire behaviour, vegetation response and recovery following bushfire.

Research on fuel dynamics, fire behaviour and bushfire risk in eucalypt forests also supports the role of prescribed burning as a tool to reduce the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires. This evidence, together with operational experience and ongoing monitoring, informs prescribed burn planning in tingle forest.

In mature tingle forest, prescribed burning is used as one of a range of risk management tools to help reduce the likelihood and impact of large, high-intensity bushfires on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and the tingle forest themselves.

Research on fire behaviour, fuel dynamics, fire severity and bushfire likelihood, including studies by McCaw et al. (2012), Cruz et al. (2022), Burrows et al. (2023), Collins et al. (2023), Furlaud et al. (2021) and Miller et al. (2024), supports the use of prescribed burning as an important tool for reducing the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires in eucalypt forests.

***Burn timing***

**What is the frequency of burning a particular area, and does this allow for regeneration of slow growing species like tingle?**

There is no single prescribed burn interval that applies to all areas. The timing of prescribed burns is influenced by a range of factors, including vegetation type, fuel accumulation, ecological values, species requirements and bushfire risk.

When planning prescribed burns, DBCA considers the fire history of an area and the needs of species and ecological communities present. Where species or

habitats are known to require longer periods between fires, this information is taken into account during burn planning.

Tingle forests are particularly vulnerable to large, high-intensity bushfires, which can cause extensive damage to mature trees, habitat and regeneration. If successive high-intensity bushfires occur before young tingle trees have matured and produced seed, local populations may be affected and recovery can be more difficult.

Prescribed burning is used to help reduce the likelihood and severity of these large bushfires while maintaining a range of habitat ages across the landscape that support biodiversity and ecological resilience.

### ***Planning***

**DBCA had a period in the 70's/80's of mosaic burning. Will DBCA go back to that program? Smaller areas more often.**

DBCA continues to apply a mosaic approach to prescribed burning at a landscape scale. The aim is to create a mix of burned and unburned areas, and a range of vegetation ages, across the landscape.

The size and design of individual burns are influenced by many factors, including vegetation type, existing roads and tracks, environmental values, community assets, access, operational requirements and bushfire risk. As a result, prescribed burns can vary considerably in size and shape.

Current burn programs include a range of treatment sizes and are designed to support biodiversity by maintaining a variety of habitat conditions while also helping to reduce the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires that can have significant impacts on communities and environmental values.

**What planning does DBCA have in place to protect Nornalup? And what burns are planned for the protection of Nornalup?**

DBCA has a number of prescribed burns planned within the Frankland District that are intended to help reduce bushfire risk to Nornalup, nearby residents, roads, visitor areas and surrounding environmental values.

Prescribed burns are planned as part of a broader landscape-scale approach to bushfire risk management. This approach considers vegetation, fuel conditions, community assets, environmental values, access and expected bushfire behaviour when identifying and prioritising burn options.

A number of proposed burns within the district may contribute to reducing bushfire risk around Nornalup, including FRK\_113 Coalmine, subject to planning, approvals and suitable operational conditions.

These activities form part of a broader strategy to reduce the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and other environmental values.

**Several burns programmed in the past have not been completed, are they rescheduled?**

Some burns that are not completed in a given year may be carried forward for future consideration, while others may be revised or removed depending on changed conditions, risk, planning requirements or operational priorities.

Inclusion in the Burn Options Program does not guarantee ignition. Each burn is reassessed before implementation, including weather, fuel and soil moisture, environmental values, resources and burn security.

**How many prescribed burns contain tingle?**

The 2026-27 DBCA Frankland District Burn Option Program includes four prescribed burns containing tingle forest: FRK\_113 Coalmine, FRK\_115 Mt Clare, FRK\_117 Swarbrick West and FRK\_118 Giants

The extent and distribution of tingle forest vary between these burn areas. Where tingle forest occurs, burn planning includes consideration of the ecological values present and the application of appropriate protection measures

**How many prescribed burns contain peat?**

Peat and organic-rich soils occur across parts of the south-west of Western Australia, including within some Frankland District burn areas.

The extent of peat varies between burn areas and is identified through mapping, local knowledge and site assessment during the planning process. Where peat is known or suspected to occur, specific peat protection measures, including moisture monitoring and site assessment, are incorporated into burn planning and implementation.

Prescribed burning only proceeds when conditions are suitable to minimise the risk of peat ignition and reduce the potential for damage to these sensitive environments.

### **How many burns are likely to commence?**

The number of prescribed burns that commence in any year depends on a range of factors, including weather, fuel and soil moisture conditions, environmental considerations, operational resources and bushfire activity.

Across Western Australia, DBCA typically undertakes around 130 prescribed burns each year from a larger pool of approved burn prescriptions. This provides flexibility to take advantage of suitable conditions when they occur.

In Frankland District, between seven and 12 prescribed burns have commenced each financial year over the past five years. However, inclusion in the Burn Options Program does not guarantee a burn will proceed, as each burn is subject to ongoing assessment and suitable operational conditions.

### **What are the key priorities for DBCA?**

The priorities that guide DBCA's prescribed burn program are consistent with the State Strategic Control Priorities for emergency management, including the protection of life, communities, critical infrastructure, industry, property and environmental values.

When planning and prioritising prescribed burns, DBCA considers a range of factors including bushfire risk, community assets, environmental values, cultural heritage, infrastructure and operational considerations. This helps ensure prescribed burning supports both community protection and the conservation of important environmental values.

A key objective is to reduce the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and other environmental values. Burn priorities are therefore informed by local conditions, identified risks and the potential consequences of bushfire across the landscape.

### **Will details for each planned burn be available online? When?**

Yes. Information on proposed burns can be accessed through DBCA's Burn Options Program website. It is expected that the 2026-27 Burn Options Program will be available online in the coming weeks. <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/fire/prescribed-burning/burn-options-program>.

Once available, users can explore the interactive map, view burn locations and access available details.

### **Will cockatoo nesting periods be avoided?**

DBCA considers the habitat and breeding requirements of Baudin's Cockatoo, Carnaby's Cockatoo and Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo when planning prescribed burns.

Where known breeding activity or nest trees are identified, this information is considered during burn planning and may influence the timing, design and implementation of the burn. Protection measures can include avoiding ignition near active nesting areas, removing fuels from around important habitat trees and applying water to tree trunks before ignition where appropriate.

The objective is to minimise impacts on breeding habitat while continuing to manage bushfire risk to communities and environmental values.

### **How will endangered fauna/flora and TECs be protected during burns?**

DBCA considers threatened species, threatened ecological communities (TECs) and other important environmental values throughout prescribed burn planning and implementation.

Potential risks to these values are identified and assessed before a burn is undertaken. Depending on the species, habitat and site conditions, protection measures may include changes to burn timing, ignition methods, exclusion areas, access restrictions and post-burn monitoring or assessment.

The aim is to minimise impacts on sensitive environmental values while reducing the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on threatened species, habitats and ecological communities over extensive areas.

### **Why are prescribed burns not surveyed pre and post burn when you need permits to take endangered wildlife?**

Environmental values, including threatened species, are considered during the burn planning process, using existing records, local knowledge and targeted field assessments. Monitoring before and after a burn is undertaken where appropriate and can include species surveys and assessment of impacts on sensitive environments such as peats and organic soils.

### **What is the process of the cultural assessment of proposed burn areas?**

Cultural values are considered throughout the prescribed burn planning process. This includes reviewing available cultural heritage information, undertaking consultation processes where appropriate, and seeking advice from Traditional Owners and cultural heritage representatives.

Where cultural heritage values are identified, prescribed burn plans may be modified to help protect those values. Depending on the circumstances, this may include changes to burn boundaries, the establishment of exclusion areas, modified ignition methods or other site-specific protection measures.

Cultural values are considered alongside community safety, environmental values, operational requirements and bushfire risk to support informed decision-making during burn planning and implementation.

**What are the plans for coastal river burning? The recent burn removed vegetation from along banks. What is the science behind this?**

Burning near rivers and coastal waterways requires site-specific planning. Factors such as vegetation, moisture levels, access, wind exposure and ecological values are all considered when designing the burn.

FRK\_074 Blue Holes was completed in November 2024 and required burning along the Frankland River to provide an edge or a boundary to ensure the safe and effective operation of the burn and meet burn security requirements. During this burn some heath forest in the north-east corner expressed high burn severity. While this is typical of heath forests, it was mild and is recovering well.

The Nornalup Inlet banks were not edged as part of FRK\_074 Blue Holes and remained mostly unburnt.

**What precautions are there to protect pristine areas of Owingup Swamp with burns planned to the North?**

DBCA uses a structured risk-management process to identify environmental values that may be affected and to ensure appropriate protections are in place before any burn is undertaken. DBCA utilises specific fire management guidance for the protection of reedbeds. This guidance provides several recommendations to minimise the risk of fire damaging reedbeds including applying fire only when moisture levels are sufficient.

**How many burns completed in A,B,C conducted this year?**

Land Management Zones (LMZs) are a performance measure used by DBCA to assess the effectiveness of the annual prescribed burning program. The zones are at the interface of populated areas and natural lands, with zoning determined by distance from the urban interface.

Frankland District undertook a total of approximately 21,248 hectares across the three land management zones (LMZs) in 2025-26.

|                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025-26 LMZ prescribed burning achievements for<br>DBCAs Frankland District |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| LMZ | Distance from populated area | Achieved (ha) |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------|
| A   | Within 3.5km                 | 715           |
| B   | 3.5-11km                     | 1106          |
| C   | Beyond 11km                  | 19,426        |

### **What section of Giants is proposed?**

The prescribed burn FRK\_118 Giants forms part of DBCA's 2026-27 Frankland District Burn Options Program and is an important landscape scale burn to protect biodiversity values and the community from the risk of potentially large and damaging bushfires. FRK\_118 Giants is approximately 353 hectares in size and consists primarily of karri, jarrah and tingle forest, along with heath.

### ***Risk management***

**It was mentioned that the effect of a drying climate is raising the SDI and consequent fire risk. Other possible impacts include lower growth rates and thus reduced fuel levels. Increased SDI presumably increases the risk of prescribed burns escaping or burning at an excessive intensity. How do you incorporate these impacts at the drying climate in your strategic and operational planning?**

DBCA considers the impacts of a drying climate in both its long-term fuel management planning and the planning and implementation of individual prescribed burns.

Climate trends, including increasing soil dryness and changing weather patterns, are considered alongside factors such as vegetation type, fuel and soil moisture, forecast weather, expected fire behaviour and burn security. These factors influence when conditions are suitable for prescribed burning and how burns are planned and implemented.

Before any burn proceeds, site-specific environmental and operational conditions are assessed to ensure burn objectives can be achieved safely and within approved parameters. As climatic conditions change, DBCA continues to adapt its planning, decision-making and operational practices using research, monitoring and operational experience.

Climate change is contributing to longer, hotter and drier conditions, which can increase the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires. These bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and other environmental values. Prescribed burning remains one of the tools used to help manage this risk as part of a broader bushfire management approach.

**Given the drying conditions which means we will eventually lose the safe prescribed burn window, what other risk management methods are DBCA investing in to protect to protect the community?**

DBCA uses a broad bushfire risk-management approach that includes prescribed burning, bushfire detection, suppression capability, preparedness planning, strategic access and targeted fuel management.

DBCA also works with partner agencies and stakeholders to improve bushfire management capability and community protection. Recent initiatives include enhancements to public information and emergency warning systems, the use of embedded weather forecasting expertise to support operational decision-making, development of portable aerial fire-retardant delivery capability, and trials of automated fire-detection camera systems supported by artificial intelligence.

Changes in climate are influencing when suitable conditions for prescribed burning occur, and these conditions may vary throughout the year. DBCA continues to adapt its planning and operations in response to changing conditions through research, monitoring, improved decision-making tools and operational innovation.

Climate change is contributing to longer, hotter and drier conditions, which can increase the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires. These bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and environmental values. Prescribed burning remains an important risk-reduction tool, but it is implemented as part of a broader suite of bushfire management measures designed to protect the community and the environment.

### ***Operational process***

#### **Why do so many controlled burns get out of control?**

Prescribed burns are carefully planned, approved and implemented under specific environmental and operational conditions. However, fire behaviour can be influenced by factors such as weather, fuel conditions, wind, terrain and the potential for reignition, which can occasionally result in fire moving outside planned burn boundaries.

When incidents occur, they are investigated and reviewed so that lessons can be incorporated into future planning and operations.

Over the past decade, bushfires resulting from escaped DBCA prescribed burns have represented between 0.22 and 1.44 per cent of all reported bushfires. These figures are reported publicly through DBCA's annual reporting processes.

Prescribed burning remains an important tool for reducing the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and environmental values.

### **Why burn such a vast area?**

The size of a prescribed burn is influenced by a range of factors, including vegetation type, existing roads and tracks, environmental values, land tenure, operational requirements and bushfire risk.

In some areas, larger burn boundaries are used because they align with existing landscape features and access networks that help support the safe and effective implementation of a burn. Using existing boundaries can also reduce the need for additional ground disturbance associated with constructing new access tracks, firebreaks or other infrastructure.

Although a burn area may be large, prescribed burns are not intended to burn uniformly. Burns are planned and implemented under conditions that generally result in a mosaic of burned and unburned areas, providing a range of habitat conditions across the landscape.

Large, high-intensity bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and other environmental values. Prescribed burning is one of the tools used to reduce the likelihood and severity of these bushfires, both near communities and across the broader landscape.

Where burns are planned in the Walpole Wilderness Area or other environmentally sensitive areas, DBCA seeks to minimise ground disturbance wherever possible and uses existing access and control features where appropriate.

### **Given the stated safety of the initial burn of FRK\_116 Vermeulen Road in spring when the paddocks were green, what justification was there for further attempts of ignition of FRK\_116 on a high fire danger day in summer?**

Following the initial ignition of FRK\_116 Vermeulen Road in October 2025, some areas of karri and tingle forest within the planned burn area remained unburned on the south west boundary, adjacent to forest (rather than private property). As conditions dried over summer, these areas continued to present a potential bushfire risk.

Additional ignition was considered in January 2026 to address the remaining unburned vegetation within the prescribed burn boundary. Any decision to proceed would have been subject to a further assessment of weather, fuel conditions, operational resources and burn objectives, and would only have occurred if conditions were considered suitable.

The additional ignition did not proceed due to lightning activity and the subsequent bushfires in the South Coast Region, which required operational resources to be redirected.

**Are there plans to mitigate the coastal heath 'all or nothing' regime?**

DBCA recognises that coastal heath vegetation can burn differently from taller forest types and may burn more completely, even under relatively mild conditions. To help reduce impacts, prescribed burns are planned and implemented under conditions that promote variability across the landscape. This can include burning when surrounding vegetation is less likely to carry fire, adjusting ignition patterns and retaining patches of unburnt vegetation where conditions allow.

Unburnt areas can provide important refuge habitat for fauna and contribute to a mosaic of different vegetation ages across the landscape. In coastal heath environments, features such as sheltered gullies, wetter areas and adjoining vegetation types may also remain unburnt and contribute to habitat diversity.

These approaches aim to balance the ecological characteristics of coastal heath with the need to reduce the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires, which can have significant impacts on biodiversity, habitat and other environmental values.

**During the last tingle burn DBCA felled a lot of trees. How many habitat trees did DBCA destroy?**

The FRK\_111 Giants East prescribed burn was undertaken to help reduce the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires affecting the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk and surrounding values.

A post-burn assessment recorded 114 fallen trees within a 91-hectare assessment area. This included a mix of tingle, karri and jarrah trees, including some trees that were already dead before the burn.

The assessment recorded fallen trees observed after the burn. It did not classify all of those trees as habitat trees, nor should it be read as a count of trees deliberately felled by DBCA. The assessment did not identify evidence that recently occupied nesting hollows had been affected.

DBCA recognises the importance of large old trees and hollow-bearing trees as habitat. The findings are being used to inform future planning, including protection measures for selected trees, ignition timing and post-burn assessment.

**Why does DBCA leave tapes after burns?**

Tape is used during prescribed burn operations to identify boundaries, hazards, exclusion areas, environmental or cultural values requiring protection, and navigation points for crews.

Some tape may remain in place temporarily while crews continue patrols, monitoring, rehabilitation works and post-burn assessments. These activities can continue for several weeks after a burn has been completed.

Where practical, tape is removed once it is no longer required for operational or safety purposes.

### **Why was DBCA planning to burn in tingle during the Fitzgerald River National Park fire?**

Prescribed burn planning occurs throughout the year; however, every ignition requires approval based on current conditions, resource availability and statewide bushfire activity. Planned burns are deferred when conditions, operational requirements or higher-priority incidents make ignition inappropriate.

Following the initial ignition of FRK\_116 Vermeulen Road in October 2025, some areas of karri and tingle forest within the planned burn boundary remained unburned. As conditions dried over summer, these areas continued to present a potential bushfire risk, and additional ignition was considered as a means of completing the planned treatment.

The proposed January 2026 ignition did not proceed due to the Fitzgerald River National Park bushfire and the associated demand on firefighting resources. Instead, mechanical treatment was used to manage the remaining unburned vegetation and reduce the risk of fire in those areas.

Large, high-intensity bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and environmental values. Decisions regarding prescribed burning are therefore continually assessed against current conditions, available resources and broader bushfire priorities.

### **Harewood – How will peatlands be secured in the proposed prescribed burn?**

Where peat or organic-rich soils occur within the proposed Harewood burn area, specific peat protection measures are incorporated into burn planning and implementation.

Peatlands are identified during the planning process, and their condition is assessed before any burn proceeds. This includes monitoring peat moisture levels and site conditions to ensure they are suitable for burning activities nearby. Prescribed burning only proceeds when conditions are considered appropriate to minimise the risk of peat ignition.

DBCA's approach is informed by current research on the relationship between peat moisture and flammability and is continually refined as new information becomes available. The aim is to protect these sensitive environments while reducing the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires that can also have significant impacts on peatlands and surrounding environmental values.

### **How effective has DBCA smoke detection trial been?**

DBCA is preparing to trial AI-supported fire detection camera technology in partnership with other agencies.

As the trial has not yet commenced, its effectiveness cannot yet be assessed. The trial is expected to begin during the 2026–27 bushfire season and will help evaluate how automated detection technology may support bushfire detection and management.

Large, high-intensity bushfires can develop rapidly, particularly under severe weather conditions. Technologies that improve the early detection of fire have the potential to enhance situational awareness and support faster operational responses as part of a broader bushfire management approach.

### **High severity looks to be higher than 1%, was this ground truthed?**

Not every individual prescribed burn is subject to a dedicated field validation process to verify fire severity mapping. However, local fire management staff regularly review mapping outputs and provide feedback to support ongoing refinement and improvement of the mapping system.

DBCA's fire severity mapping methodology was developed using information from approximately 1,000 field assessment sites and continues to be refined through additional field validation and operational experience. The methodology includes data from mixed karri and tingle forest environments and has been published in the scientific literature.

Like all remote-sensing products, fire severity mapping has known limitations and some degree of classification error. Mapping accuracy can vary between vegetation types and site conditions. Despite these limitations, fire severity mapping remains a useful tool for understanding burn outcomes and supporting ongoing fire management, monitoring and research.

## **Other**

### **Is an electronic copy of the presentation available?**

Yes, the presentations are available through the DBCA website - <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/news/2026/community-information-sessions-bushfire-management>

### **Are previous burn plans available through freedom of information?**

Previous prescribed burn plans may be requested through the Freedom of Information (FOI) process.

Requests are assessed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and other relevant legislation. Information may be released unless it is subject to an exemption under the legislation. This can include information relating to threatened species, cultural heritage, personal privacy, public safety or other sensitive matters.

DBCA also publishes the three year and Annual Burn Options Program on its public facing website and provides other public information through community sessions, stakeholder engagement, website updates and burn notifications.

The FOI process helps balance public access to information with the protection of sensitive environmental, cultural and personal information.

### **What was the origin of the Middle Road fire?**

The origin of the Middle Road bushfire is suspected to be deliberate ignition at seven individual ignition points.

### **What is the latest science and why is it not front and centre?**

DBCA's fire management approach is informed by current peer-reviewed research, operational experience, monitoring, local knowledge, and lessons learned from both prescribed burns and bushfires.

Recent fire science research was presented at the community forum, including current studies and emerging findings relevant to bushfire risk management, biodiversity conservation and prescribed burning.

Fire science is continually evolving, and DBCA uses an adaptive management approach to incorporate new knowledge into planning and operational decision-making. This includes research undertaken by DBCA scientists as well as relevant work by universities, research institutions and other organisations.

DBCA maintains a publicly accessible collection of fire-related research through its library and has contributed more than 200 peer-reviewed scientific publications to improve understanding of fire behaviour, ecology and bushfire management.

The science continues to inform how DBCA balances the protection of communities, biodiversity and other environmental values, particularly in the face of increasing bushfire risk associated with hotter and drier conditions.

**Vermeulen Road burn seems to have broken containment lines, why? No mention of the tingles lost in this burn, why?**

Ignition of FRK\_116 Vermeulen Road commenced in October 2025 and focused initially on the heath component of the burn area.

During implementation, a number of small hopovers occurred and were contained by crews. The burn did not result in an escape beyond the prescribed burn area. Fire also entered some adjacent tingle vegetation and burnt surface fuels, including leaf litter in parts of the tingle forest.

The planned ignition of additional tingle and karri vegetation within the prescribed burn boundary was not completed. Further ignition was subsequently considered; however, this did not proceed after lightning activity resulted in bushfires in the South Coast Region and firefighting resources were redirected to response operations.

**Why burn such vast areas? i.e. Denbarker**

FRK\_072 Denbarker was implemented in November 2019 and covered approximately 8,000 hectares.

The size of the burn was influenced by the limited availability of existing roads, tracks and other suitable landscape features that could be used to safely divide the area into smaller burn units. Using existing boundaries helps reduce the need for additional ground disturbance associated with constructing new access tracks, firebreaks or other infrastructure.

Although the planned burn area was large, prescribed burns are not intended to burn uniformly. Burns are implemented under conditions that generally result in a mosaic of burned and unburned areas, with varying fire intensities across different vegetation types. This helps maintain a range of habitat conditions across the landscape.

**Was DBCA responsible for the Deep River burn along the riverbanks that burnt beyond the designated area? Why was there no mention of this?**

DBCA understands this question relates to the FRK\_107 Ordinance prescribed burn undertaken in October 2024.

During implementation of the burn, a small hopover occurred in the northern section of the burn area near the Weld River. The fire crossed the intended burn edge but was contained at an existing track and did not develop into a broader escape.

Incidents such as hopovers are recorded and reviewed as part of normal operational processes. Information presented at community forums is necessarily summarised and may not include every operational occurrence associated with individual burns.

**A very large area was burnt north of Denmark which created a huge cloud and ash that fell on Albany. How did any animals escape this fire size? How is this supporting biodiversity? What assessments of fauna were documented before and after this prescribed burn?**

The FRK\_112 Willmott-Quindinillup prescribed burn formed part of the Frankland District 2025–26 Burn Options Program and was undertaken between September and December 2025 to help reduce the risk of large, high-intensity bushfires affecting communities and environmental values.

Although the planned burn area was large, prescribed burns are undertaken under milder conditions than bushfires and are generally designed to create a mosaic of burned and unburned vegetation. These unburned areas can provide refuge habitat for wildlife during and after a burn and contribute to a range of habitat ages across the landscape. This variability is an important component of maintaining biodiversity.

Large, high-intensity bushfires can affect extensive areas of habitat, reduce available refuge areas and impact threatened species and ecological communities. Prescribed burning is one of the tools used to reduce the likelihood and severity of these bushfires while maintaining opportunities for habitat recovery and regeneration.

DBCA undertakes monitoring and assessment based on the environmental values identified for a particular burn. This may include targeted species surveys, such as for quokka populations, and monitoring of sensitive environmental features including peat and organic soils.

The smoke produced by the burn travelled towards Denmark and Albany due to the prevailing wind conditions at the time of implementation.

**In previous years, we have requested speakers address the nature conservation aspects of prescribed burning, this year there is no one doing this. Will DBCA undertake to have a speaker on conservation in the future?**

Thank you for the feedback.

DBCA recognises the strong community interest in the relationship between prescribed burning and nature conservation. Future community information sessions will consider including dedicated presentations or discussion topics focused on biodiversity, ecological values and the role of fire in conservation management.

These sessions will continue to provide an opportunity to share current research, monitoring results and operational experience, and to discuss how nature conservation considerations are incorporated into prescribed burn planning and implementation.

**How is DBCA protecting trees that are susceptible to fire – tingle, bullich, casuarina?**

DBCA considers the fire response and ecology of different vegetation types and tree species when planning and implementing prescribed burns. Burn objectives, weather conditions, fuel moisture and expected fire behaviour are carefully assessed to achieve risk reduction outcomes while minimising impacts on important environmental values.

Many mature tingle and bullich trees can survive and recover from low to moderate intensity fire, however very high-intensity bushfires can cause significant damage, reduce tree survival and impact habitat values across large areas. Responses to fire vary between species, site conditions and fire severity.

DBCA has developed specific operational guidelines to help protect significant trees, including tingle trees. Depending on the circumstances, protection measures may include:

- reducing fuel around the base of selected trees;
- applying fire retardant to tree trunks;
- modifying ignition methods and ignition timing;
- using burn conditions that minimise fire intensity in sensitive areas; and
- retaining unburned vegetation where appropriate.

Some species commonly referred to as casuarinas respond differently to fire. While some species can recover after fire, others rely on seed stored in the canopy to regenerate. These differences are considered during prescribed burn planning and implementation.

**So it seems that most info is presented in graph form. Does this mean that anyone can make a decision without being in the local area?**

No. Maps, graphs and other analytical tools are important decision-support resources, but they do not replace local knowledge or on-ground assessment.

Prescribed burn planning and ignition decisions draw on a range of information sources, including local operational experience, site inspections, current weather and fuel conditions, environmental values, fire behaviour predictions and risk assessments. Local staff play a critical role in providing context and understanding of the landscape, its values and current conditions.

Final decisions are made by authorised personnel at local, regional and State levels using both on-ground information and decision-support tools. This helps ensure decisions are informed by the best available information and reflect local conditions at the time.

**What evidence has led DBCA to conclude increased prescribed burning in red tingle is justified?**

DBCA's records do not indicate that prescribed burning in red tingle forest has increased in recent years. Over the past four years, approximately 250 hectares of red tingle forest have been treated through prescribed burning.

The decision to include areas of red tingle forest within a prescribed burn program is informed by a range of factors, including bushfire risk, fire history, environmental values, vegetation condition and operational considerations. Prescribed burn planning also incorporates measures to protect significant tingle trees and other ecological values where they occur.

**Are all blocks containing red tingle identified? And what have been identified for ignition?**

Known red tingle occurrences are identified through a combination of vegetation mapping, local knowledge, previous planning records and field assessments where appropriate. This information is used to inform prescribed burn planning and the application of protection measures where required.

Of the 16 proposed burns in the 2026–27 Frankland District Burn Options Program, four contain tingle species. FRK\_113 Coalmine, FRK\_115 Mt Clare and FRK\_118 Giants contain varying amounts of red tingle forest, while FRK\_117 Swarbrick West predominantly contains yellow tingle forest.

The presence of red tingle within a proposed burn area does not mean all tingle vegetation within that area will be burnt. Burn planning considers the location of

significant environmental values and may include specific protection measures, modified ignition techniques and retention of unburned areas where appropriate.

### **How is DBCA responding to opposition to Tingle and peat burning?**

DBCA recognises that there are differing community views about prescribed burning in areas containing tingle forest and peatlands. The department is committed to ongoing engagement with community members, stakeholders and Traditional Owners, and to providing information that reflects current science, operational experience and monitoring outcomes.

DBCA continues to apply an adaptive management approach, using research, monitoring, post-burn reviews and new scientific information to continually improve the planning and implementation of prescribed burning in these environments.

When planning burns, DBCA considers the potential impacts of both prescribed fire and bushfire. Large, high-intensity bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, biodiversity, tingle forests, peatlands and other environmental values. Prescribed burning is one of the tools used to help reduce these risks while applying measures to protect sensitive environmental values.

DBCA will continue to balance community safety, biodiversity conservation and the protection of other environmental and cultural values when making fire management decisions.

### **Is the prescribed burn strategy for tingle forest being reviewed in light of hotter, drier conditions?**

DBCA applies an adaptive management approach to prescribed burn planning and implementation, which includes consideration of changing climatic conditions, operational experience, monitoring outcomes and emerging scientific research.

Hotter and drier conditions are expected to increase the likelihood and severity of large, high-intensity bushfires. These bushfires can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, biodiversity and tingle forest ecosystems. Prescribed burning remains one of the tools used to help reduce the likelihood and severity of these events.

DBCA continually reviews and refines its planning and operational practices in response to new information and lessons learned from prescribed burns and bushfires. This includes considering factors such as burn timing, ignition methods, protection measures for significant trees, traffic management where burns intersect public roads, and other operational practices that may influence burn outcomes.

DBCA recognises the level of community concern following recent burns in tingle forest. Lessons from those burns, including Giants East, are being considered as

part of DBCA's adaptive management approach to improve the planning, approval and implementation of future burns. This includes consideration of burn timing, ignition patterns, protection of significant trees, treatment of fuels around selected trees, use of retardant or water where appropriate, traffic and public safety arrangements, and post-burn review.

## References

Burrows, N. D., Wills, A., & Densmore, V. S. (2023). Fuel weight and understorey hazard dynamics in mature karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) forests in southwest Western Australia. *Australian Forestry*, 86, 68–81.

Chevis, H., & McCaw, L. (2026). Lessons from the 1937 southwest Australian fires. *Studies in Western Australian History*, 37, 67–97. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.T2026040700011500086735824>

Collins L, Trouve R, Baker PJ, Circulus B, Nitschke CR, Nolan RH, Smith L, Penman TD. 2023, Fuel reduction burning reduced wildfire severity during extreme fire events in south-eastern Australia. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 343:118171

Cruz et al. (2022) An empirical-based model for predicting the forward spread rate of wildfires in eucalypt forests. *International Journal of Wildland Fire*.

Densmore, V. S., van Dongen, R. J., Ong, R., & Harris, B. G. (2023). OzCBI: the composite burn index adapted to assess fire severity and key fauna habitat features in Australian ecosystems. *Australian Forestry*, 86(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049158.2023.2168400>

Densmore VS, Barnesby TK. (2025) For peat's sake! Peat type influences critical moisture thresholds that prevent combustion of organic soils in Western Australia. *International Journal of Wildland Fire* 34, WF24204. <https://doi.org/10.1071/WF24204>

Furlaud JM, Prior LD, Williamson GJ, Bowman DMJS. Bioclimatic drivers of fire severity across the Australian geographical range of giant *Eucalyptus* forests. *J Ecol*. 2021; 109: 2514–2536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2745.13663>

McCaw et al. 2012 Changes in behaviour of fire in dry eucalypt forest as fuel increases with age. *Forest Ecology and Management*.

McCaw, L., Middleton, T. Recovery of Tall Open Eucalypt Forest in South-Western Australia following Complete Crown Scorch. *fire ecol* 11, 95–107 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.4996/fireecology.1103095>

Miller BP, Fontaine JB, Tangney R, McCaw L, Cruz MG, Hollis JH. (2024) Comment on 'Self-thinning forest understoreys reduce wildfire risk, even in a warming climate'. *Environmental Research Letters* 19:068001

Wardell-Johnson G., Crellin L., Napier C., Meigs G., Stevenson A., Wong S.I. 2017. Has canopy height and biomass recovered 78 years after an intense fire in south-western Australia's red tingle (*Eucalyptus jacksonii*) forests? *International Journal of Wildland Fire* 26, 148-155.

Wardell-Johnson, G.W. (2000), Responses of forest eucalypts to moderate and high intensity fire in the tingle Mosaic, south-western Australia: comparisons between locally endemic and regionally distributed species. *Austral Ecology*, 25: 409-421. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1442-9993.2000.01049.x>