

Framework

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Fire management mission statement

Purpose

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (the department) will implement an effective and efficient fire management program in order to minimise the fire risk level on the department managed lands.

By implementing the fire management program, the department aims to be a professional, accountable, coordinated, socially responsible, risk and ecologically sound land manager.

In particular, the department recognises the potential ongoing effects of climate change on fire management and will maintain an adaptive approach to its fire management policies and systems and incorporate these into operations in the future.

The department recognises the inherent risks associated with fire and its management in Queensland. This fire management mission statement sets out the objectives and fundamental management principles used by the department to manage the risk of fire on its land portfolio.

Rationale

The Australian landscape has a well-documented history of fire as a common occurrence. This has varied from natural regenerative fires as required by much of the Australian landscape to devastating wildfires destroying properties and causing death and injuries.

The department manages an extensive and diverse body of land parcels across the State. This statement recognises that the vision and strategic objective for the department managed lands into the future is to deliver sustainable benefits for the current and future generations of Queenslanders through optimising sustainable development outcomes and opportunities for those lands. A requirement for this vision and strategy is the management and maintenance of department managed land and, in particular, managing the underlying risk level relating to fire on that land. All department managed lands are to be managed appropriately with due consideration given to protection of the public and adjoining private land until such time as the potential future use of the department managed land is determined.

The primary intent of this statement is to detail the department's approach in meeting its obligations as a landowner in managing the level of risk of fire within the legislative framework.

Principles of the framework

- Human safety must be given priority over all other fire suppression considerations such as protecting infrastructure and environmental values.
- A risk assessment of land parcels through identification and prioritisation of high risk lots will be undertaken in order to manage the fire risk on the department lands.

- Hazard reduction activities (planned burns) will be planned and conducted taking into account the associated risk levels for fire protection of the public and adjoining private land.
- Hazard reduction activities will be conducted in compliance with relevant occupational health and safety policy and standards.
- Fire management will aim to minimise the associated risk levels for fire on that land.
- Management of fire operations will follow the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System.
- Fire operations will be supervised and monitored by trained and authorised personnel.

Fire management objectives

- In carrying out its management of the fire risk, the department adopts a risk management approach to fire management on its land in order to minimise risk of the adverse effects of fire on human life, property and the environment.
- Undertake fire management practices, including planned burning operations to reduce the identified risk level on a parcel.
- Maintain up-to-date fire information, planning and management systems and practices.
- Adopt a cooperative approach to fire management, assisting other fire agencies, land management authorities, adjoining land holders and Traditional Owners where not associated with a wildfire.
- Ensure that all personnel undertaking fire mitigation activities have the appropriate experience, skill sets, equipment capabilities and management processes in accordance with contemporary standards.

Wildfire Response

The department is not a first response agency in fighting wildfire. However the department's State Land Management (SLM) officers are able and willing to provide an 'agency liaison officer or landowner representative role' to an established Incident Management Team. This can include provision of mapping resources and local knowledge.

The department only takes on responsibility for a wildfire once an incident controller has deemed the fire to be safely contained and advised Firecom the 'fire has been left in the hands of the landowner'; SLM officers will then undertake on ground 'mopping up/blacking out' activities

Legislation

Legislation needs to be understood in the light of common law rights and obligations of landholders. Landholders have a duty of care not to cause foreseeable harm to their neighbours. This duty applies to the activities that landholders undertake in respect to taking action to manage the hazard from such things as pest plants and animals or fire that come naturally to the property.

In addition to the common law duty of care, there are also statutory duties and frameworks that consider fire as a hazard and/or a management tool such as:

- the duty of care to the land in the *Land Act 1994* for occupiers of State land,
- the general environmental duty in the *Environment Protection Act 1994* and
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999, Planning Act 2016* and Planning Regulation 2017
- the duty to not harm Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*
- Under Section 69 of *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* the commissioner of the Queensland fire emergency services can serve a requisition requiring the department to reduce the fire risk, make or maintain fire breaks and deal with any vegetation on State managed land (SML), with a view to reducing potential danger to person's property or the environment. This could include hazard reduction burning or slashing.

Related documents

Unallocated state land Management Statement

Level of Service Table

Approval

Position	Name	Date
Executive Director	Graham Nicholas	17/05/2019

Version history

Version	Effective Date	Comments
1.00	17/05/2019	Endorsed

Further information

- Contact your nearest business centre (https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/?contact=state_land), or
- Refer to <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/state> , or
- Call 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

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