

Guideline

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DNRME Fire Management Program



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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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Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) State Managed Land Document Layout

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Procedure Fire Strategy For the completion of DNRME Hazard Reduction Plans

DNRME Simple Prescribed Burns

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DNRME SLM Regional Wildfire Risk Mitigation Ops Plan

DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works

1 Purpose

DNRME (the department) is responsible for an extensive and fragmented estate of state and freehold lands spread throughout Queensland. The department's responsibilities on those lands extend to include the management of fire related risk. The primary intent of this document is to detail the department's considerations when assessing fire related risk and to describe the process by which appropriate mitigation strategies are decided by the department.

The department's Fire Management Program draws upon consistent application of standardised risk assessment protocols as well as the implementation of industry best practice risk mitigation activities, including preparation and operational aspects of hazard reduction burns (planned burns) on the department managed lands.

The department's hierarchy of fire risk management places highest priority on protecting human life, followed by protecting infrastructure and environmental values.

2 Fire Management Program

This document provides the overarching objectives and identifies the procedures associated with the department's Fire Management Program. These objectives inform the direction and development of supporting operational guidelines and procedures for the management of fire related risk on the department managed lands – together they form the foundation of the department's fire management systems.

The overarching philosophy of the department's Fire Management Program is to use a risk management approach. In this regard the department elects to be guided by the fundamental fire management risk hierarchy of protection of human life; property; and the environment.

The following question is therefore integral to the department's Fire Management Program:

"What we are trying to achieve by managing fire related risks on DNRME managed lands?"

Given the nature and inherent variability of lands managed by the department it is difficult to apply a single response to the question posed, it is instead considered more easily addressed at an individual property or land management area scale.

Implementation of subordinate procedures such as the "Guideline DNRME Fire Risk Management Plan" and "Procedure Fire Strategy for completion of DNRME Hazard Reduction Plans (Internal)" achieves this by way of providing the overall structure, details and reasoning for adoption of a particular fire management approach on defined lands. This information is presented within the Guideline DNRME Fire Risk Management Plan at an individual land parcel or land management area scale.

3 Guideline

The DNRME Fire Management Program aims to address the following issues, using best available information and knowledge:

1. Identification of the department's estate (State Managed Lands –SML) and recognition of community values and interests within the SML.

2. Legislative obligations – including matters such as biosecurity, cultural heritage.
3. SML Fire hazard profile assessment parameters.
4. Determination of the fire hazard profile for SML.
5. Evaluation of the relevant risk SML may pose to non-SML in the immediate vicinity and associated assets, including natural and cultural assets.
6. Identification and mapping of relevant Risk Management Zones, Asset Protection Zones (APZ), Wildfire Mitigation Zones (WMZ), Conservation Management Zones (LMZ) and Planned Burning Exclusion Zones (PBEZ). See further details herein regarding Risk Management Zones.
7. Determination of appropriate mitigation method/s to moderate identified risks: possibilities include mowing and slashing, fuel load manipulation and proactive use of fire (i.e. planned hazard reduction burns; pile burning.)
8. Determination of intended fire regimes which are inclusive of an acceptable range of variation in burning prescriptions for each vegetation community and/or habitat type
9. Strategic and effective use of the department resources –prioritisation of effort
10. Delivery of the DNRME Fire Management Plan across the DNRME Regions.

3.1 Identification of the department's estate (State Managed Lands – SML) and recognition of community values and interests within the SML.

An accurate inventory and understanding of the actual land the department is responsible for should be seen as a corner stone to the operational implementation of the department's Fire Management Program. Current ownership of land can be readily interrogated via DNRME's SmartMap database and its linkage to the Automated Titles System (ATS).

It should be noted that the department's estate is not static and land management responsibility routinely shifts with the department's allocation of lands via the *Land Act 1994* or through disposal and sale of the department held freehold lands.

State Land Management (SLM) officers are encouraged to check the tenure and ownership status of land each and every time management activities are planned to be undertaken by the department. This should also extend to land surrounding SML as the ultimate appropriateness of actions proposed on the department estate may very well be influenced by the surrounding land tenure.

When developing Fire Risk Management Plans and strategies, consideration should also be given to factors such as community values of the SML. Which may make a dramatic difference to the ultimate management purposes and practices employed by the department. Operational works on SML should recognise these community values.

Community values commonly associated with SML include:

- Nature Conservation Value

- Recreation Value
- Cultural Heritage Value
- Open Space Value
- Development or Economic Value
- Operational Value
- Other Interests in SML

The department will engage with Traditional Owners having an interest in the SML to achieve a collaborative approach to the management of fire risks on SML.

3.2 Legislative obligations – including matters such as biosecurity, cultural heritage.

The department acknowledges that legislation needs to be understood in the light of common law rights and obligations of landholders. In accord with common law requirements the department recognises it holds a duty of care, as a landholder, not to cause foreseeable harm to its neighbours. This duty applies equally to all activities employed by the department, including when taking action to manage risks associated with pest plants and animals or fire on SML. The department shares these common law obligations equally with all holders of lands adjoining the departmental estate.

In addition to satisfying its obligations under the common law duty of care, the department also aspires to meeting obligations imposed by statutory duties and frameworks, including:

- the general environmental duty in the *Environment Protection Act 1994*;
- 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*;
- the general biosecurity obligation in the *Biosecurity Act 2014*;
- the duties of a landowner in the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*.

When developing Fire Risk Management Plans and Hazard Reduction Burn Plans for SML, consideration is to be given to meeting the legislative requirements imposed on the department by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*. Such consideration should also be balanced with concepts such as strategic investment, practicality and the relevant fire risk identified in relation to the lands.

3.3 SML Fire hazard profile assessment parameters

A fire hazard profile assessment of the relevant lands should be undertaken to inform whether or not a Fire Risk Management Plan needs to be developed.

Operational practicality should be considered when deciding how the SML will be managed and administered. Where practicable, it may be favourable for adjoining SML to be grouped together into a “Land Management Area” for collective assessment and consideration during plan development stages.

Assessments should be undertaken in relation to:

- fire risk levels;

- presence and condition of improvements on the lands;
- social, cultural and natural values;
- biosecurity threats; and
- surrounding land use and tenure.
- known interests in the SML.

Whilst the fire risk assessment is taken to be the most important element and should be undertaken first, the other elements will likely inform the ultimate fire risk management strategy developed for the relevant SML – particularly where protection requirements are identified.

3.4 Determination of fire hazard profile for SML

Determination of fire hazard profiles for SML is most accurately achieved by employing a two phase assessment process and focusing on “full fire potential” of relevant lands.

3.4.1 Phase 1 – Redi-Portal

A cross reference of SML with Redi-Portal will provide an initial fire related risk assessment relevant to specific lands, or land management areas.

Redi-Portal is the Queensland government’s portal for the assessment of potential hazard to life and properties from the threat of wildfires and was primarily developed as a strategic analysis system for use by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). Redi-Portal identifies the relevant hazard levels of assets adjacent to bushland based on vegetation type, the slope and aspect of the locality, and the likelihood of a fire event occurring under particular fire danger index conditions.

Whilst Redi-Portal may be being used as a planning tool to identify hazard in the environment from wildfire, the department experience has identified limitations in its application to SML.

The Redi-Portal identifies 4 Hazard profiles:

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Adjacent buffer zones

Following Redi-Portal analysis, further assessment is prioritised for all SML allocated a Hazard profile of “Very High” or “High” from Redi-Portal, together with all SML which are identified as being “Adjacent Buffer Zones” to the aforementioned lands.

3.4.2 Phase 2 – Ratification against DNRME data/knowledge

Phase 2 of the department assessment involves further investigation of all SML allocated a preliminary hazard profile of “Very High” or “High” from Redi-Portal - together with all SML which are identified as being “Adjacent Buffer Zones” to those lands.

These identified SML are then scrutinized against data held by the department to determine a “corrected” Hazard profile for each relevant land parcel or land management area. It should be noted

that it is not uncommon for preliminary hazard profiles to reduce to “Medium” or “Low” following Phase 2 investigation.

Phase 2 investigation considers data including, but not limited to:

- Past DNRME Fire Risk Mitigation Works and/or known fire history
- Rainfall
- Land use
- Vegetation
- Local knowledge

Information held in relation to vegetation communities and habitat types, including significant flora and fauna and/or indicator species/communities, can be influential when determining the hazard profile of SML. Details concerning Regional Ecosystem Mapping can be sourced from:

<https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/vegetation/vegetation-map-request-form>

Once a corrected hazard profile has been determined for each relevant SML parcel or land management area, a Fire Risk Management Plan must then be developed for all these lands or land management areas, which maintain a hazard profile of “Very High” or “High”.

Fire Risk Management Plans provide finer details relevant to risk, fuel and land assessments specific to a defined land parcel or land management area. Fire Risk Management Plans also provide for the department’s objectives and planned fire risk mitigation activities relevant to those lands.

Fire Management Plans are reviewed by the department on a routine basis so as to ensure currency of awareness regarding fire hazard potential and relevant risk posed. These reviews may be annual, bi-annual or as needs from the hazard potential determined. It should also be noted that seasonal variations will significantly influence fire risk levels. An area of SML may have a high priority one year but may not have the same priority the next year because of seasonal variations: such as extended wet seasons or the reduction of fuel load on adjoining properties. Therefore high risk properties will need to have incorporated in there developed plans, an assessment of the risk level for the projected high fire danger periods.

3.5 Evaluation of the relevant risk SML may pose to non-SML in the immediate vicinity and associated assets, including natural and cultural.

Determining the fire hazard profile for SML will inherently inform the relative risk posed to adjoining properties and other lands in the immediate vicinity. This measure commonly focuses on constructed assets. Consideration should also be given to unconstructed assets: such as agricultural, horticultural, natural and cultural assets which may also be present on surrounding lands.

As the implementation of DNRME’s Fire Management Program may hold potential to inadvertently cause harm or negatively impact upon unconstructed assets present on adjoining lands, it is recommended that these also be considered within the context of risk assessment processes and the development of preferred fire risk management strategies.

If fuel reduction is determined then a risk based approach will be undertaken. This risk based approach will be guided by the documents and recommendations provided by Australia's lead research agency for fire management, AFAC (Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council) through its National Burning Project. They advocate a risk management approach.

3.6 Identification and mapping of relevant Fire Management Zones, including; Asset Protection Zones (APZ), Wildfire Mitigation Zones (WMZ), Conservation Management Zones (LMZ) and Planned Burning Exclusion Zones (PBEZ).

The department's risk assessment considerations relevant to fire potential is an interrelated matrix of likelihood and consequence. For the translation and communication of intent regarding implementation of the DNRME Fire Management Program in regards to the identified risk on particular SML, the department has adopted common terminology in the identification of Fire Management Zones for the SML.

3.6.1 Fire Management Zones (FMZs).

FMZs are areas of SML where fire risk management activities are employed to achieve specific asset, fuel and overall land management objectives. Each of the four FMZs differs in its intended fuel treatment aims and associated performance measures. Although the name of the zone indicates the primary purpose for that zone, it is recognised that multiple goals can be achieved when undertaking activities in a given zone. For example, a fire risk mitigation works undertaken primarily for land management purposes may also have asset protection results. FMZs describe fuel treatment aims and associated performance measures on a particular SML.

3.6.1.1 Asset Protection Zone (APZ)

Using intensive fuel treatment, the APZ aims to provide the highest level of localised protection to human life and property and key community assets. The goal of fuel treatment is to reduce radiant heat and ember attack in the event of a wildfire. To do this the fuel (vegetation) hazard needs to be reduced and kept at low risk levels, requiring more frequent fuel treatment. Fuel treatment will be carried out in the APZ through a combination of planned burning and other methods such as mowing, slashing or vegetation removal.

Achieving the objectives of this zone may have negative impacts, such as to ecosystems. Where this is likely, the department will seek to moderate the negative impact as far as practicable. The overriding aim within this zone is to reduce the identified risk level.

3.6.1.2 Wildfire Mitigation Zone (WMZ)

This zone aims to reduce the speed and intensity of wildfires. This zone complements the APZ in that the implementation of fire risk mitigation activities in the WMZ is designed to protect assets which could include human life and property, habitat, cultural, environmental or water infrastructure, particularly from ember spotting during a wildfire. Fuel reduction by planned burning or other techniques is undertaken less frequently than in an APZ zone but when fuel hazard levels exceed prescribed limits.

Where practicable the WMZ will aim to achieve ecological outcomes by seeking to manage for ecologically desirable fire regimes, provided wildfire protection objectives can still be met. This may include using other fuel management methods.

3.6.1.3 Conservation Management Zone (LMZ)

Within this zone, planned burning will be used for three broad aims:

- wildfire protection outcomes by reducing the overall fuel and wildfire hazard in the landscape;
- ecological resilience through appropriate fire regimes;
- Management of the land for particular values including forest regeneration and protection of water catchments at a landscape level.

The frequency of the fuel management that is undertaken is less frequent than what occurs for the zones, APZ and WMZ. Other fuel reduction methods will be used within this zone as appropriate.

3.6.1.4 Planned Burning Exclusion Zone (PBEZ)

This zone excludes the use of planned burning primarily in areas intolerant to fire.

3.7 Determination of appropriate mitigation methods to moderate identified risks

Parameters associated with factors 1-6 above, once determined, will inform and guide the development of suitable Fire Risk Management Plans for SML. Each Fire Risk Management Plan will detail the department's intent regarding how fire related hazard will be managed to best mitigate the associated risk. This may include any number of appropriate mitigation methods to moderate identified risks: possibilities include mowing and slashing, fuel load manipulation and proactive use of fire: planned hazard reduction burns; pile burning.

Fire Risk Management Plans should, wherever practicable, seek to minimise adverse environmental impacts from fire management activities, such as unnecessary destruction of fauna and flora; unnecessary destruction of habitat; degrade value of scientific areas, research sites, cultural sites, recreation sites and scenic points; cause soil disturbance leading to erosion; and adverse effects to water and soil resources.

3.8 Determination of intended fire regimes which are inclusive of an acceptable range of variation in burning prescriptions for each vegetation community and/or habitat type

Where implementation of DNRME Fire Management Program incorporates proactive use of fire as a favourable risk mitigation activity; such as routine implementation of prescribed hazard reduction burns. Consideration is given to the development of activity based objectives which aim to minimise the potential for adverse impacts. These objectives include:

- Containing fire spread to within the prescribed burn boundaries;
- Attaining fire behaviour which achieves the fuel reduction;
- Attaining fire behaviour which achieves beneficial environmental objectives;

- Managing the social and community based concerns.

Therefore, assessing the fuel attributes, resource requirements, weather conditions and lighting patterns suitable to achieving these objectives is considered imperative for each and every application of controlled burns. How these elements are ultimately selected and applied, including determination of appropriate containment strategies and resourcing requirements, will be vital to achieving favourable outcomes for the department.

3.9 Strategic and effective use of DNRME resources – prioritisation of effort.

The department consciously seeks to achieve strategic efficiencies through the implementation of holistic management practices on SML. In addition to activities specific within DNRME Fire Management Program, matters such as biosecurity (weed and pest control), land maintenance and access issues, *Land Act 1994* compliance and occupation by native title holders should also be considered during the development of Fire Risk Management Plans.

The DNRME Fire Management Program dictates that department will prioritise fire risk management efforts on SML as follows:

- Priority 1 land is identified to be “High Risk” or “Very High Risk” to life and property following Redi-Portal and the department ratification using additional DNRME information and knowledge;
- Priority 2 land is identified to be “High Risk” to public infrastructure and primary production;
- Priority 3 land is identified to be “High Risk” to environmental and/or cultural values.

The DNRME Fire Management Program also dictates that fire risk management activities will be undertaken on Priority 1 land in the first instance, followed by subsequent effort on lands deemed Priority 2 and Priority 3 where resources permit.

In keeping with a risk-based approach, the ultimate order in which each DNRME Region will implement Fire Risk Management Plans will also be determined by factors including, but not limited to:

- Advice from the Fire Management Committees;
- Advice from QFES;
- Air and water quality issues particularly in areas of major urban development;
- Community sentiments.

3.10 Delivery of the DNRME Fire Risk Management Plan across the DNRME Regions.

So that the DNRME Fire Management Program can be implemented as intended, each DNRME Region is charged with responsibility to deliver the following actions:

- a. Identify all SML within each local government area within their region;

- b. Use Redi-Portal and additional DNRME information to identify all SML with a corrected fire hazard profile of “Very High” or “High” in their region;
- c. Apply the DNRME Risk Analysis Matrix to all SML with a corrected fire hazard profile of “Very High” or “High” to identify which of those lands also has a current risk rating of “High Risk” or above.
- d. Undertake a desktop audit of all SML with “High Risk” and either “Very High” or “High” hazard profile to identify Priority 1 SML.
- e. SML identified to have a current risk rating level of or above “High Risk” are to be further analysed by SLM staff with ‘ground truthing’ via use of the DNRME Risk Management Procedures to determine whether these SML should also be identified at or above other Priority 1 SML for fire management operations.
- f. Prepare a Fire Management Plan for all SML identified to be Priority 1 within their region (this can be at an individual land parcel scale or at a land management area scale which incorporates a combination of land parcels or a bio-region).
- g. SML identified as “of concern” by the community, State agencies and/or local governments - which otherwise are not identified using the method described – must be assessed by the department using the hazard profile, risk management and priority approach
- h. At the discretion of the region, prepare Fire Risk Management Plans for all SML identified to be Priority 2 and Priority 3 within their region.
- i. Reporting: provide reporting, for their region, as detailed below.

4 DNRME Fire Management Program Reporting

Each DNRME region must provide routine reporting, in accord with the agreed reporting frequency.

Major reporting commitments include annual DNRME SLM Regional Wildfire Risk Mitigation Ops Plan and DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works. Additional ad hoc reporting requirements may also be necessary.

Regional DNRME SLM Regional Wildfire Risk Mitigation Ops Plans are prepared annually on a calendar year basis, and should include:

- the number of active Fire Risk Management Plans;
- the number of “High Risk” SML and land management areas identified
 - Priority 1
 - Priority 2
 - Priority 3.
- Operational activities/treatments and approximate timelines for the proposed treatments
 - Priority 1 (minimum)

- Priority 2 (recommended)
- Priority 3 (optional)

DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works captures completed fire risk mitigation and land management activities undertaken on SML – either directly by SLM officers or via contractor engagement.

DNRME SLM Regional Wildfire Risk Mitigation Ops Plans and DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works will be used for reporting twice a year:

- Once for the financial year – this is used for Estimates Committee reporting.
- Secondly on a calendar year – this will be used for operational reporting and future planning.

Each DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works will include

- Number and type of fire risk reduction activities undertaken and hectares treated directly by:
 - mowing and slashing;
 - fuel load manipulation;
 - planned hazard reduction burns;
 - pile burning;
 - Kilometres of Fire Trials maintained.
- Other Mitigation activities: Number of land management activities undertaken to manage the risk: dangerous tree removals, pest and weed management projects, waste removal, land slips, recreation issues and community concerns.
- Number of properties/assets protected through risk mitigation actions.

5 DNRME Fire Management Program - State Land Management (SLM) Officers

The department has established SLM Teams positioned throughout the state, each of which is aligned to one of the three DNRME regions of North, Central and South.

The department ensures SLM officers are appropriately trained and qualified to actively participate in operational activities associated with the DNRME Fire Management Program and routinely adopts best practise training and development opportunities offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) as well as agencies engaged in fire management.

For the departmental officers to be engaged in fire management activities, especially planned burning a minimum competency is required. This competence will be as per the Australian Government Training standards.

Where other State agency officers, Rural Fire Service volunteers and local government officers are engaged in fire management activities on SML, the department will ensure all individuals hold the same, or equivalent, minimum level of competency

Considering the unique and dangerous nature of the work undertaken by the SLM officers, each DNRME SLM unit has dedicated fire fighting vehicles and is equipped with necessary communication and safety equipment to comply with relevant Workplace Health and Safety Standards (WH&S).

DNRME SLM also maintains a suite of established internal WH&S policies and procedures, including Risk Assessments and Safe Work Procedures to ensure SLM officers are fully cognisant with their role, the duties they may need to perform and the equipment they may need to use – these requirements also extend to any engagement of external contractors.

Further information relevant to WH&S, including Risk Assessments and Safe Work Procedures for particular SLM tasks and activities are readily accessible to SLM officers. SLM officers are encouraged to review these documents prior to each and every occasion a particular task is undertaken. Further WH&S information relevant to SLM can be located within their respective Regional Share Point Sites.

The department ensures SLM teams are appropriately equipped. Prescribed personal protective clothing (PPC) and personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn during operational activities. All PPE and PPC must abide by the appropriate Australian and New Zealand Standards.

Reference should be made to Departmental Policies:

- Personal Protective Equipment HRS/2007/2955- Version 1
- Field operations HRS/2007/3001- Version 1
- Remote Area Policy- currently under review

Working hours and meal breaks while on undertaking fire related activities is to be as prescribed in DNRME Fatigue Management Guidelines and linked to relevant policies and procedures relevant to the operation of government vehicles.

In the absence of any present DNRME Fatigue Management Guidelines specifically related to SLM duties, SLM officers are encouraged, in direct consultation with their Regional Management Team (RMT), to reference the general fatigue management guidelines within the department:

- Fatigue Management –HR guideline: Developed by Human Resources: Corporate and Business Partnership (Draft Version 4) and the
- DNRME Safe Work Practice: Guidelines for DNRME Firefighter Health and Fitness Program

Each unit in the three regions is led by either a Regional Co-ordinator or Principal Land Officer (PLO). These Coordinators, or PLOs, are then responsible for the operational teams and thus for the activities and management of the teams.

The department regions may also have established backup staff available to assist with implementation of DNRME Fire Risk Management Program. Commonly referred to as SLM Auxiliaries, these SLM officers act in voluntary capacity and comprised of existing fire trained and accredited officers. Utilisation of an auxiliary workforce allows SLM to effectively increase resources on the ground during peak delivery periods and to effectively manage SLM fatigue and achieve compliance with WH&S requirements and employment conditions.

In addition to the alignment of dedicated department resources to SLM activities, the department also routinely engages external contractors, where practicable, under robust Standing Offer Arrangements (SOA's). Contractors are routinely engaged to undertake activities such as fire control line construction and maintenance.

6 Background Policies and Documents

In managing land related risks and liabilities, including the discharge of duty of care obligations relevant to fire management on SML, it is favourable for the department to be aware of contemporary fire management practices, policies and legislation.

Contemporary fire management practices, policies and legislation recognises the need for land managers to take reasonable efforts to protect themselves and the community from fire risk using best practice land management and risk mitigation techniques.

The *Interagency Protocol for Fire Management* between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), DNRME, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) and Forestry is a commitment between the agencies to work co-operatively to achieve the fire management objectives of the respective organisations in a safe, efficient, cost effective and environmentally sound manner.

The *Interagency Protocol for Fire Management on State Lands between QPWS, DNRME and Forestry* equally commits the department to work co-operatively with QPWS and Forestry.

7 Legislation

Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990

The lead Act in relation to the prevention and control of fire throughout Queensland is the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (F&ES Act)*. This Act provides for the control of fire lighting throughout the State via the fire permit system, as well as providing for the establishment of fire fighting forces to deal with existing fire.

In relation to SML, the department is taken to be the “landowner” for the purposes of the F&ES Act, as such the following sections of the F&ES Act should be considered:

- Section 7 binds the crown to the provisions of the F&ES Act.
- Section 53 provides that QFES can demand the assistance of the department to deal with any fire danger on SML.
- Section 69 provides opportunity for the commissioner of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) to serve a requisition requiring the department to reduce the fire risk, make or maintain fire breaks and deal with any vegetation on lands within SML, with a view to reducing potential danger to SML or the environment.

Despite the provisions of the F&ES Act, it is considered favourable for the department to proactively seek opportunities to satisfy its legislative obligations as a manager of lands with respect to fire. In recognition of the elevated scrutiny which may be placed upon government agencies, particularly with regards to the management of land, the department seeks to work cooperatively with communities and fire management agencies rather than be the subject of any compliance actions by QFES.

Land Act 1994

The State of Queensland through the department has a responsibility under section 4 of the *Land Act 1994* (Land Act) to manage land for which it is responsible according to specified principles. The Land Act states, among other things, that the land must be managed having regard to

“...sustainable resource use and development to ensure existing needs are met and the state’s resources are conserved for the benefit of future generations.”

Environmental Protection Act 1994

Section 23(2) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act) states that where there is conflict between the EP Act and the F&ES Act, the F&ES Act will prevail but only to the extent of the conflict. In this regard, the EP Act could be seen as being subordinate to the F&ES Act in terms of preventing and controlling the outbreak and spread of fire on SML throughout the State.

Vegetation Management Act 1999

The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA) provides limited exemptions for the clearing of native vegetation on SML without a permit. Clearing of native vegetation may be carried out without a permit in certain circumstances where the clearing is carried out by the Chief Executive Officer administering the Land Act, and the clearing is necessary for:

- essential management, or
- the control of non-native plants or declared pests; or
- For a specified activity.

The construction of firebreaks, fire lines and fire trials are considered within the essential management definitions. Hazardous fuel load reduction is also an activity allowed within the definition of essential management where the activity is in accordance with the *Fire and Rescue Act 1990*.

It will be necessary to ensure that fire management activities are undertaken with reference to the VMA and the Land Act to determine if the activities require a permit to clear or are exempt.

Regional Ecosystem Mapping will assist officers in identifying the ecological classification of vegetation on the subject lands and assist with determining the requirements of planning for suitable biodiversity outcomes and identifying proactive conservation actions. The VMA identifies the status of regional ecosystems as being either: Endangered; Of Concern; or Not of Concern.

All staff should be aware of the exemptions within the vegetation management framework

Available:<http://DNRME.dnr.qld.gov.au/vegetation/pdf/exemptions.pdf>

Native Title Act 1993; Native Title (Qld) Act 1993; and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003

Whilst these acts do not directly relate to fire management they can have a major influence on land management practices and obligations. The DNRME Fire Risk Management Program recognizes that native title rights and interests may exist in relation to some SML and, wherever practicable, consideration should be given to providing opportunities for native title holders to contribute to the department land management activities.

The department has also developed duty of care guidelines relevant to cultural heritage.

Search Cultural Heritage Sites

<https://culturalheritage.datsip.qld.gov.au/achris/public/public-registry/home>

<https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/>

- Native Title information can also be discovered on QGlobe.
<https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/>

This layer is found under “Society”, “National native title tribunal”. You can also check “Heritage Register” for works in particular areas.

- Record Result and any actions needed

Failure to consult or follow the correct procedures and guidelines could cause serious implications for the department and officers involved.

NOTE: Officers will liaise closely with officers in the native title holders and Native Title and Cultural Heritage Units within the respective agencies.

Biosecurity Act 2014

The department holds a general biosecurity obligation relevant to all SML, the department also recognises that this same general obligation applies to all other person's whom access and use SML.

To ensure effective consideration and management of biosecurity threats on SML all departmental officers, contractors and consultants engaged in operations on SML must take preventative measures such as:

- minimising introduction/spread of biosecurity threats by vehicles, machinery and equipment;
- minimising introduction/spread of biosecurity threats by materials and products; and
- minimising introduction/spread of biosecurity threats by animals.

When contractors and consultants or other external parties are engaged to assist in operations on SML they will be required to provide a Biosecurity Declaration before entering SML, except in emergency situations. The requirement also applies to all State Agency equipment and personnel used for project works.

Reference should be made to the department policy:

[Policy LPG/2003/1395- Prevention of weed reproductive material spread by departmental employees.](#)

[Guideline – DNRME Minimising weed spread by departmental vehicles, machinery or equipment.](#)

8 Social Responsibilities

In addition to legislative responsibilities and requirements the department must assess its response to a fire in the light of potential adverse impact in respect of the following values.

8.1 Environmental responsibilities

Proactive use of fire may have to be excluded in certain areas or at certain times to meet requirements to protect areas with identified highly significant biodiversity values.

Fire management practices need to combine fire protection measures with sound environmental management to ensure both the sustainability of the environment and protection of life and assets.

This includes the responsible use of chemicals, retardants and firefighting foams in accordance with relevant standards and procedures.

8.2 Smoke Management

All fire management practices must be planned to minimise the negative impacts of smoke on community health, crops, visual amenity and traffic safety. Persons potentially impacted are to be consulted or advised, and warning signs are to be strategically placed.

These issues can be facilitated by adequate public notification. This is a condition of a fire Permit: that the public and neighbours are to be notified of the intention to undertake a hazard reduction burn.

9 Related documents

Framework Fire Management Mission Statement

Framework DNRME Wildfire Response

Framework DNRME USL Management Statement

Guideline DNRME Fire Risk Management Plan

Procedure Fire Strategy For the completion of DNRME Hazard Reduction Plans

DNRME Simple Prescribed Burns

Fact Sheet Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Procedure

DNRME SLM Regional Wildfire Risk Mitigation Ops Plan

DNRME Planned Fire Mitigation Works