

NPWS Fire Management Program



DID YOU KNOW?

The NPWS prescribed burn program is **dynamic and flexible** to allow burns to be scheduled at short notice when the conditions are right. It also means deferring some burns to the next season or year to make sure we get the right results.

Fire is a natural process and prescribed burns help to protect, sustain, and enhance habitats, especially for threatened species. That's why prescribed burn planning takes into account ecological needs along with bushfire risk.

Most prescribed burns focus on bushfire risk reduction and are deemed **successful if this objective is met**, irrespective of the number of hectares burnt.

A significant amount of other bushfire mitigation activities such as **slashing, weed control, and fire track maintenance** are carried out each year to reduce bushfire risk on public land. Grass is not a fire risk when green so slashing only happens once it's cured, otherwise it grows back and needs extra treatment. It's common to see long, green grass in parks in the lead up to summer.

Challenges to completing a prescribed burn



Conditions

Every region has a short window of suitable conditions each season where burns can be safely and effectively completed. **When conditions are too wet or vegetation is too patchy the fire will not carry; if it's too dry there is a risk of a burn escaping or causing environmental damage.** On top of this every burn has specific requirements such as wind direction and speed, which have to be considered when scheduling burns.



Smoke

Smoke from prescribed burns is carefully managed to minimise exposure to communities and industries. **Smoke taint to wine grapes has not been recorded since NPWS started its prescribed burns program in 2004.**



Bushfire

If a prescribed burn is planned in or near an area that has recently been impacted by bushfire the burn may be postponed or cancelled. This allows the vegetation to recover and ensures enough suitable habitat for wildlife to find refuge in until the burnt area has regenerated.

Statewide prescribed burn figures: spring 2020 – autumn 2025

| 2024 - 25 | Public land* | Private land | Statewide total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Number completed | 39 | 13 | 52 |
| Hectares treated | 3292 | 179 | 3471 |

| 2023 - 24 | Public land* | Private land | Statewide total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Number completed | 52 | 30 | 82 |
| Hectares treated | 5491 | 166 | 5657 |

| 2022 - 23 | Public land* | Private land | Statewide total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Number completed | 43 | 21 | 64 |
| Hectares treated | 2205 | 198 | 2403 |

| 2021 - 22 | Public land* | Private land | Statewide total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Number completed | 61 | 31 | 92 |
| Hectares treated | 4536 | 2582 | 7118 |

| 2020 - 21 | Public land* | Private land | Statewide total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Number completed | 65 | 31 | 96 |
| Hectares treated | 6019 | 242 | 6261 |

*Public land to 2022-23 includes SA Water. Public land from 2023-24 is Dept. for Environment and Water land only after SA Water moved to a different portfolio.