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 2021 to autumn 2026

			Public land*	Private land	Statewide total
2025–26	Planned	#	49	29	78
		ha	6091	1020	7111
	Completed	#	27	14	41
		ha	1859	3259	5118
2024–25	Planned	#	50	22	72
		ha	5269	840	6109
	Completed	#	39	13	52
		ha	3292	179	3471
2023–24	Planned	#	55	35	90
		ha	8671	586	9257
	Completed	#	52	30	82
		ha	5491	166	5657
2022–23	Planned	#	60	25	85
		ha	4084	281	4365
	Completed	#	43	21	64
		ha	2205	198	2403
2021–22	Planned	#	56	32	88
		ha	5235	3046	8281
	Completed	#	61	31	92
		ha	4536	2582	7118

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

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water
National Parks and Wildlife Service SOUTH AUSTRALIA
FIS1102023