

# FIRE FOR THE FUTURE

How fire can contribute to healthy, resilient pastures in South East Queensland



Fire has shaped Australian landscapes for millennia. **When strategically applied, planned burning improves pasture quality, supports native grasses, reduces bushfire risk, and builds drought resilience**, making it an essential tool for sustainable grazing land management in South East Queensland.

## BENEFITS OF WELL-PLANNED FIRE

### PASTURE AND SOIL HEALTH



- Promotes healthy soil function
- Enhances pasture condition
- Removes rank, over-mature growth
- Stimulates high-quality green pick
- Helps control woody weeds
- Encourages even grazing

### RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE



- Reduces bushfire fuel loads
- Protects infrastructure and feed
- Maintains good land condition
- Promotes deep-rooted perennials
- Supports resources for native species
- Enhances ecosystem resilience

## GETTING FIRE RIGHT: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### KNOW YOUR VEGETATION

Fire-adapted native species, such as kangaroo grass and black speargrass, thrive with periodic, well-managed fire and grazing, which helps encourage these desirable species while reducing less productive grasses such as wiregrass. In contrast, some introduced and invasive grasses, including giant rat's tail grass and African lovegrass, can become more dominant when fire is applied inappropriately or used in isolation from chemical, mechanical and manual control measures. While many sown pastures (e.g. rhodes grass and panic grasses) are generally fire-tolerant, they typically require less frequent burning than fire-dependent native pastures. Understanding your pasture composition is critical.



Kangaroo grass



African love grass



Rhodes grass

**Strategic fire management = healthier pastures, reduced risk, greater drought resilience**

This project is being supported by Healthy Land & Water and the SQNSW Innovation Hub through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

## TIMING AND PREPARATION



Avoid burning ahead of forecast drought conditions



Burn late dormant season to early growing season with good soil moisture



Rest paddocks pre-burn to build adequate fuel to sustain fire (1,500–2,000 kg/ha)



Manage weeds 4–6 weeks prior to burning



Prepare fire containment lines

## MATCH FIRE INTENSITY TO OBJECTIVES



### LOW INTENSITY

Slow-moving flames for pasture rejuvenation



### MODERATE INTENSITY

1–2 m flames for woody weed and regrowth control



## POST-BURN MANAGEMENT



Rest for 4–6 weeks for initial recovery



Avoid heavy grazing for 3–6 months



Use a mosaic approach, burn sections in rotation



Maintain 90% groundcover for resilient pastures



## RISKS OF POORLY TIMED OR UNPLANNED FIRE

- Loss of forage and damage to infrastructure
- Loss of groundcover and increased erosion
- Damage to native vegetation and animal habitat
- Promotion of invasive and undesirable species

### Legislative requirements

Obtain a Permit to Light Fire from Queensland Fire Department by submitting a completed [Application for Permit to Light Fire](#) to your local Fire Warden.

Follow all prescriptions on your issued "Permit to Burn" and ensure compliance with any local or state government regulations.



## INTEGRATING FIRE WITH GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Proactive fire management is most effective when used alongside conventional grazing land management practices:

- ✓ Monitor pastures, groundcover and land condition
- ✓ Apply rotational grazing to allow recover and seeding
- ✓ Use forage budgets to adjust stocking rates
- ✓ Manage land according to its capabilities and limitations

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