

Shire of Broome
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MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

Firebreak failures increase bushfire risk in Broome

The Shire of Broome is reminding property owners about the importance of installing firebreaks to reduce the risk of bushfire.

Surveys conducted after the 15 May 2017 deadline for clearing firebreaks found that more than 75 per cent of affected properties either did not have a firebreak or had inadequate firebreaks.

The Shire of Broome Firebreak Order issued under WA's *Bush Fires Act 1954* requires town site properties bigger than 2000sqm and rural or pastoral properties to have a firebreak from 15 May to 31 December, and smaller town site properties must have flammable material other than live trees removed.

This year for the first time a contractor using a drone was employed to survey properties for firebreaks in areas including 12 Mile, Coconut Well, 4 Mile and Lullfitz Dve where the law permits their use. Other properties were surveyed by Rangers.

Shire of Broome Manager Health, Emergency and Rangers, Ty Matson, said landowners who failed to put in adequate firebreaks were putting themselves, the community and firefighters at risk.

"Bushfires are a serious threat in Broome, and especially following a significant wet season like we experienced this year," Mr Matson said.

"Firebreaks are a vital part of decreasing the risk of bushfire by halting their spread, and also in helping fight bushfires in the event they break out by allowing access to firefighters and their vehicles."

The requirement for firebreaks to be in place was advertised widely leading up to the 15 May deadline and letters were sent to affected property owners.

Follow-up letters will now be sent to all of those with firebreaks that do not meet requirements, with a warning period before further property inspections and infringements being issued. Any enquiries should be addressed to shire@broome.wa.gov.au.

The Shire of Broome has also worked with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Parks and Wildlife, Yawuru, Broome International Airport, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Volunteer Bushfire Brigade to carry out controlled burns, install and maintain firebreaks and slash long grass.

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