

Time of issue:

Date of issue: 28 April 2011

FESA's Kimberley Pastoral Station & Highway Roadside Aerial Controlled Burning Projects Begin

Fire & Emergency Services Authority of WA (FESA) Kimberley aerial controlled burning program to reduce the impact of volatile dry season wildfires on the Kimberley is underway.

Kimberley residents and tourists are advised that FESA's 2011 controlled burning program will initially target approximately 1,200 kilometres of roadside vegetation along the Great Northern and Victoria Highways between Broome and Kununurra over the next several weeks.

Regional Director Robert Cox said that "Record rain over this year's wet season has also left the Kimberley with the heaviest fuel load on record and that could also result in widespread destructive wildfires as it dries out during the coming dry season from July through to November.

Therefore FESA has already started this years Aerial Controlled Burning (ACB) program on participating pastoral stations and some Indigenous Reserves in the West & East Kimberley which will continue from late April through to June this year.

"We are working closely with Local Shires and pastoralists & some Remote Indigenous Communities to assist in developing a fire management plan for each participating parcel of land. The plans will include the identification and implementation of strategic fire breaks, through a combination of grading, ground burning and or aerial controlled burning, with the intent being to reduce the impact of possible uncontrolled late season wildfires.

"Due to the increased fuel load across the Kimberley and the significant increased risk of environmental and biodiversity damage caused by late season wildfires FESA is significantly reducing the cost of ACB to the Pastoralists. Also if the Pastoralist participates with FESA in developing a Pastoral Fire Management Plan for their Station, FESA will waive all costs for both the plan and the aerial controlled burning on their Station. "

FESA is encouraging all Kimberley Pastoralist's who have not yet registered in this years ACB program and wish to participate, please contact FESA Perth by phone 9323 9856, fax 9323 9495 or email jade.leask@fesa.wa.gov.au.

"The highway burning program, which is now in its third year, will also reduce the fuel loading on the highway buffer strip and lessen the likelihood of opportunistic fire lighting along the highway which has the potential to cause large scale destructive wildfires on pastoral land & communities

Mr Cox said the combination of strategic fire breaks on pastoral land and the highway buffer burning program this year would lessen the impact of any late season wildfires on the Kimberley communities, infrastructure, flora and fauna biodiversity and the environment.

"As this planned burning will be along the Kimberley region's main highway, motorists should to take caution where they come across smoke and small fires near the highway.

“During this period people are advised that they do not need to ring “000” unless they believe property is under threat,” he said.

For more information please contact Robert Cox, FESA Regional Director Operations Kimberley on 91583200.

END: