



MEDIA STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release

Kimberley shires welcome bushfire mitigation funding to strengthen community safety

The Shires of Derby / West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham-East Kimberley welcome more than \$592,000 in Western Australian Government funding through the Bushfire Mitigation Activity Fund Grant Program (MAFGP) to support targeted bushfire mitigation activities across the Kimberley that strengthen resilience and improve community safety.

The funding will deliver 33 bushfire mitigation treatments across eligible tenure areas within the three shires, including strategic fuel reduction, firebreak maintenance, planned burning where appropriate, and other targeted works to reduce bushfire risk around communities, homes, critical infrastructure and priority assets.

The Shire of Derby / West Kimberley will receive \$340,456 for 16 treatments, the Shire of Halls Creek \$153,738 for six treatments, and the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley \$97,959 for 11 treatments.

Vernon Lawrence, spokesperson for the participating shires said the funding was an important investment in protecting Kimberley communities from bushfire risk.

"Bushfire management in the Kimberley comes with unique challenges. Our region is vast, remote and often difficult to access, and we rely heavily on dedicated volunteer firefighters to protect our communities," said Mr Lawrence. "These treatments are carefully targeted to eligible tenure areas where they can provide the greatest benefit in protecting lives, homes and critical infrastructure. They are one part of a broader bushfire preparedness approach that requires everyone to play their part."

Mr Lawrence said Kimberley bushfire mitigation requires careful planning due to the region's seasonal conditions and bushfire risk profile. *"Our peak bushfire season occurs during Perth's winter and coincides with the Kimberley's busiest tourism period. Thousands of visitors travel through the region at this time, including people camping, exploring remote areas and travelling on key tourism routes where emergency response can be challenging due to distance and terrain. Rapid vegetation growth during the wet season can create significant fine fuel loads. Even one-year-old grass growth can carry fire under the right conditions, which is why managing fuels early and undertaking appropriate mitigation activities throughout the year is so important,"* said Mr Lawrence.

The shires are reminding residents and visitors that bushfire preparedness is a shared responsibility. *"Keeping yards free from long grass, leaf litter, fallen branches and other combustible materials can make a significant difference in protecting homes and supporting firefighters during an emergency. This is especially important in remote communities where response times may be longer,"* said Tamara Clarkeson, CEO of the Shire of Derby / West Kimberley.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to:

- download the **Emergency WA app** to prepare a bushfire plan; and set a watch zone for their home, workplace or travel area;
- check conditions before travelling through the Kimberley during bushfire season; and
- know what actions they will take if a bushfire threatens their area.

"Bushfires can move extremely quickly when conditions are hot, dry and windy and can catch people off guard," said Sue Leonard, CEO of the Shire of Halls Creek. *Staying informed, having a plan, and acting early can help keep people safe."*

Anyone who sees a fire or signs of a bushfire should report it by **immediately calling Triple Zero (000) and request Fire brigade**. Early reporting gives firefighters the best opportunity to respond quickly and prevent fires from escalating.

The Shires of Derby / West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham East Kimberley thank the Western Australian Government and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services for supporting practical bushfire mitigation activities across the Kimberley.

About the Kimberley Regional Group

The Kimberley Regional Group (KRG) is an alliance of the four Shires of the Kimberley, being the Shires of Broome, Derby / West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham East Kimberley. Our Vision is to maintain and enhance the rich diversity and liveability of the Kimberley for its people and the world. Collaboratively the group seeks to drive positive impact across the region through improved social, economic and cultural outcomes.

Media Contact

Mr Vernon Lawrence

CEO Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley / Secretariat Kimberley Regional Group

M – 0417 011 275

E - vernon.lawrence@swek.wa.gov.au