

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY & AGRICULTURE

FIRE ON YOUR FARM

Bushfires will affect people in many ways, from those whose homes are damaged or destroyed to those who lose property, stock, crops, water supplies, soils or pastures.

If you have been affected by bushfires, support is available, not just in those first critical hours of the fires occurring, but also during the long recovery process afterwards.

Land management support and advice is available at your local Natural Resources Centre, through a number of organizations including; Natural Resources South Australian Murray-Darling Basin (NR SAMDB), Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA), Biosecurity SA and Local Action Planning Groups.

You can also call the Bushfire Hotline on 1300 362 361

PASTURES AND PRODUCTION

Allowing time for your pastures to recover and ensuring that your productive cropping ground is protected is critical for future livelihood of your property after fire.

- Exclude stock from areas affected by fires, particularly areas which are vulnerable to erosion such as hills, sand dunes, sandy soils and slopes.
- Consider reducing your stocking rate by sending stock to agistment or by placing stock in containment areas.
- Supplementary feeding should take place in restricted areas to reduce risk of weed spread and soil loss.
- Monitor for weeds regularly as part of an integrated pasture management program.
- Reduce grazing pressure by controlling feral animals such as rabbits and goats.
- Monitor health of stock regularly for injury and burns resulting from the fire.
- Your first shearing time may be difficult due to the amount of ash in the fleece

FERAL ANIMALS

- While feral animals are at low levels, integrated control methods are most effective. Contact your local NRM District Officer for more information or involvement.
- Control Rabbits and Goats to reduce grazing pressure on pastures and native vegetation areas.
- Control foxes and feral cats to reduce predation on vulnerable stock and native wildlife.



WATER SYSTEMS

- Check water supplies (for both people and animals) as they may be damaged or contaminated due to ash and smoke.
- Check Poly pipe, plastic tanks and fittings as they may be burnt or non-existent
- Pumps may also be damaged and unsafe and should be checked by a qualified electrician.
- Your water supply may appear fine until there is rain and run-off of ash. Continue to monitor as the season breaks.
- Protect surface run off and waterways from stock movement by ensuring protective fencing and trough watering points are functional.
- Use this opportunity to review the location of your watering points.

WEED INCURSION

- Feed out hay and stock feed in a confined area to reduce likelihood of weeds being spread throughout the property and monitor feed out areas and be suspicious of unfamiliar plants that germinate.
- Utilise weed identification skills of your local NRM Officer or an agronomist to identify suspect plants.
- Ensure that vehicles and equipment of contractors and advisors are clean and free of weeds before entering your property to replenish water supplies, rehabilitate fire breaks, clear fence lines and re-establish vegetation.



FENCES

Fixing fencing is often seen as a priority job after a fire, however as stock numbers will be low, and as fence lines can create erosion, it may also be an opportunity to take the time review your properties fencing needs.

- Fencelines may catch soil drift, in areas of severe drift it is better to remove fencing prior to sand building up over top of them.
- Patching fences is a short term measure as the galvanised netting and wire once affected by fire will perish after a couple of years and fences will ultimately need to be replaced.
- Every wooden strainer should be checked as they can burn underground and the damage not be noticeable until they are worked on.
- Consider the opportunity to review your property's fencing layout, fence to land class and arrange laneways for stock and machinery movement within your boundary.



EROSION MANAGEMENT

Fire affected soils are extremely prone to both wind and water erosion. Our region's light sandy soils, dunes and hilly terrain are at risk particularly in the early months of the year.

- Retain soil structure and reduce soil loss by minimizing soil disturbance in all areas affected by fire.
- Encourage regeneration of native pastures and perennial pasture areas by reducing grazing pressure by containing stock and controlling feral animals.
- In smaller areas, utilise hay bales, cover crops and fallen limbs, placed on the soils surface, to reduce the risk of erosion at a site.
- In larger areas establish a cover crop of barley, when soil moisture is adequate, to reduce top soil loss and erosion
- Monitor the property for weeds regularly as part of an integrated weed management plan.

PROPERTY PLANNING

- Consider attending a Rural Land Management Course, seek the assistance of an agronomist or contact local Natural Resources Centre for information on property planning.
- Use this time to consider the layout of your property. Consider fencing to landclass and the suitable placement of stock watering points.
- Remove fencing as soon as practicable. This will allow soil to move across your property more effectively and reduce risk of blow outs. Contact your local Natural Resources Centre for more information.

OTHER ASPECTS OF RECOVERY

- Contact your local Natural Resources Centre to discuss kangaroo culling and to obtain a destruction permit if necessary.
- Photograph everything – both areas of damage and areas that have survived. Take a lot of landscape shots as well for reviewing later as your property recovers.
- Offer help. If you offer assistance or advice, it may not be wanted. Don't be offended, the natural reaction is "to do it yourself as you have always done". Sometimes those affected may not want help immediately and you may need to offer again after one week. Nobody should be alone in their recovery



For more information

MURRAY BRIDGE NATURAL RESOURCES CENTRE.

Natural Resources SA MDB has a number of District Officers that can assist you with your recovery from Bushfire, please contact us on.

P (08) 8532 9100

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www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/samurraydarlingbasin



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



Government
of South Australia