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Prescribed burning an essential tool in managing community safety

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) expresses its sympathy for the WA residents who have lost their homes in the recent fires at Margaret River.

AFAC believes that it is important to have a constructive look at what happened, take the lessons and make whatever changes are necessary.

AFAC supports the past and future use of prescribed burning as an essential tool for managing safety of the community and for biodiversity of the natural environment. It notes the support for the use of prescribed burning by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2010), and the many other national and state inquiries.

Despite the best planning and operation things can always happen when you are working with nature and an element like fire that is so dynamic. It is critical we do not lose sight of why we are doing this work, and despite the ever present risks, prescribed burning must continue to be done.

“A lot of time goes into planning and conducting burns nationally but the risks are always there,” said Naomi Brown, AFAC CEO. “This is why the industry has supported a national research agenda, through the Bushfire CRC, to better understand and manage these risks.”

Land management agencies know that events that happened at Margaret River can happen at any time, but the consequences of not doing burning far outweigh the damage from large bushfires as we well know.

“The use of prescribed burning is still by far the best approach to reducing the risk from large disastrous bushfires,” Naomi said.

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