



Media release

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Help for landholders to tackle potential fire threats

Cyclone-affected landholders who are struggling to clean up fallen trees ahead of the bushfire season are being given access to a new resource which helps estimate fuel loads.

The hot and dry months ahead pose a serious fire-threat for North Queensland properties that have higher than normal fuel hazards because of fallen timber and new growth.

The information package is designed specifically for rural northern Australia and provides landholders with practical tips from a number of sources on how to prepare for the coming months, including a step-by-step guide to compiling a fire plan.

The kit has been compiled by NQ Dry Tropics and other natural resource management bodies, Terrain and Northern Gulf Resource Management Group, with the help of environmental science firm, Firescape Science.

NQ Dry Tropics Grants Administrator, Mark Tartelin, said Cyclone Yasi and sustained rainfall during the wet season will make this year's bushfire season particularly challenging.

"There's been a substantial build up of grass and vegetation, and on some properties up to half of the trees have been blown over by the cyclonic winds," Mark said.

"The reality is that many landholders would not have had the time or the means to remove all the trees by now or establish fire-breaks."

Leasie Felderhof from Firescape Science says while there are hundreds of employed and volunteer firefighters in North Queensland, the key element to preventing and responding to bushfires is to ensure the community is well prepared.

"It's been eight months since Cyclone Yasi, but the effects are still being felt across the north," Leasie said.

"Indeed, one of Yasi's legacies may well be a potentially serious bushfire season.

"Over the dry winter months, the moisture in plants and grasses falls substantially, increasing both the potential for it to ignite, as well as its intensity."

The fire plan package is free of charge to landholders in the cyclone-affected area.

It can be obtained by contacting NQ Dry Tropics on 07 4724 3544 or by calling Firescape Science on 07 4091 1289.

NQ Dry Tropics' region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays. **Media contact:** Sara Lando 4722 5729 or 0466 014 728.
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