

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Operation Cool Burn to reduce bushfire risk

September 4, 2017  
COOKTOWN

Cook Shire Council has joined forces with emergency services from across the Far North to reduce the risk of bushfire after a frightening 2016 fire season.

The Cooktown Fire Management Group, comprising stakeholders and emergency groups, has identified four high risk areas – the airport reserve, the borefields off Endeavour Valley Road, Brown Street near Keating’s Lagoon and the Marton reserve - which are currently part of a hazard reduction burn. Operation Cool Burn 2017, involving more than 50 firefighters and up to 15 fire vehicles, started yesterday and is expected to be completed today, Rural Fire Queensland Area Director Neil Parker said. “Residents need to be aware of the firefighters and changed conditions in the area, and drive accordingly,” Mr Parker said. “People living in Cooktown and Marton should also be aware of smoke and take precautions such as shutting windows and removing washing from lines.”

Mr Parker said teamwork was key to reducing the risk of bushfire, with property owners required to take responsibility for fire risks on their land. “Although QFES is taking action, we can’t do it alone and by working together we will be well prepared for the months ahead,” he said. “Now is the time to prepare your property by identifying and fixing fire risks such as overhanging branches, leaf litter in gutters, yard junk and overgrown shrubs and grass.”

Cook Shire Council has also begun its annual firebreak maintenance program, including a new break along the Asmuss Street road reserve to prevent fire spreading between the borefields and Keating’s Lagoon. Council Chief Executive Officer Tim Cronin said the break had caused concern in the community due to its visibility on the hillside just outside Cooktown. “We are conscious of the amenity of our town, however public safety must come first and the break was needed for both control of future bushfires and during this week’s operation,” Mr Cronin said.

Visit the Rural Fire Service’s website, [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au), for more information on Operation Cool Burn.

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